# مجلة اللغة

## العدد الثانى



مركز البحوث العربية و الأفريقية

# اللغة AL-LOGHA

## سلسلة أوراق علم اللغة

"اللغة" لة كمة غ دورية تصدر عن اعة اللغوي القاهرة تنشغل بقضايا لغوية ومسائل مرتبطة باللغة.وتقوم الدورية بنشر الأ اث ال تقدم أثناء اجتماعات ا ماعة مركز البحوث العربية وتقبل الدورية أيضاً أ اث مستقلة باللغات الثلاث: العربية والإ ليزية والفرنسية.

**للاستفسار** : رجاء التوجه إ جردا منصور أو مد ة دوس العنوان التا :

مركز البحوث العربية بالقاهرة.

**تحرير:** جردا منصـور

*مد ـ ة دوس*

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فرى ديفيس - ا امعة الأمريكية

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موضوع السلسلة: دراسات حول اللغة العربية فى مصر
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دراسات حول اللغة العربية فى مصر

# المحتويات

هذا العدد مهدى إ **الدكتورة عفاف ا نو** ال شاركت بعملها و ربتها الكـ ة تأسيس اعة اللغوي القاهرة، وظلت تشجع وتدعم نشاط ا ماعة حـ اية حيا ا.

لقد كانت الدكتورة عفاف صديقة وزميلة عزيزة لكث من أعضاء ا ماعة سـوف يترك غيا ا شعوراً عميقاً بافتقادها.

# ا قدمة

استمرت اعة اللغوي القاهرة نشاطها ا عتاد خلال العام الدراسي ١٩٩٩-٢٠٠٠ وقدمت خلال هذا ا وسم موعة شيقة من الأ اث نأمل أن تنشر البعض منها أعداد قادمة من هذه الدورية.

يشتمل هذا العدد من دورية "اللغة" على أربعة أ اث من ال قدمت أحد الاجتماعات ال عقدت السنوات ا اضية، أما البحث ا امس فهو نتاج ورقة قدمت مؤ ر با ارج. و يع أ اث هذا العدد تعا ظاهرة من ظواهر اللغة ا نطوقة مصر.

قامت جونفور دل بدراسة إحدى جوانب ظاهرة الازدواجية اللغوية مصر وبالأخص ا ستوى اللغوي ا عروف بلغة ا ثقف وهي اللغة ا نطوقة ال يستخدمها ا ثقفون أحاديثهم العامة. وسوف تأ نتائج هذه الدراسة بالفائدة للباحث ا تخصص دراسة اللغويات العربية بصفة عامة والباحث دراسة ظاهرة الازدواجية اللغوية بصفة خاصة.

تقوم مد ة دوس بدراسة ظاهرة معينة من ا طاب ا نقول من خلال ا نهج اللغوي التار ي وتربط ما ب ظهور تلك الظاهرة الكتابة وما ب ا طاب الشفاهي. واعتمدت الدراسة على مقابلة نصوص من عصور ولغات تلفة، أو ا نصوص فرنسية من القرون الوسطى نصوص عربية ذات طابع تار ي من العصر العثما وأخ اً بعض ا قتطفات من الصحافة ا صرية ا عاصرة.

يسلط فري ديفيس الضوء على اللهجة ا صرية القرن السابع عشر بالدراسة ال قام ا ليله اللغوي الدقيق لكتاب "هز القحوف شرح قصيد أ شادوف" ليوسف الشربي ، والذي يعت من أهم ا صادر عرفة اللغة ا نطوقة ذا العصر.

تنتسب دراسة مد الرخاوي نهج علم اللغة النفسي وتعا الدراسة ظاهرة شـيوع مـا يسمى بألفاظ الاستعانة ا طاب اليومي للمتحدث . يقوم الباحث حاولة تصنيف هذه العبارات و لميل وظائفها ا ختلفة.

وختاماً تأ دراسة جيهان علام اا تنتمي للمنهج اللغوي الاجتماعي وتقوم الباحثة برصد و لميل ا عجم الذي يستخدمه الشباب ا تمع ا صري. تظهر الباحثة كيـف أن اللغـة الشبابية اا تقوم أساساً على عناصر معجمية تكمن وظيفتها إظهار انتماء ا تحـدث الشاب إ هذه الفئة وكذلك انفصاله عن عا الكبار.

ANNOUNCEMENT

# المؤتمر السنوى السابع لتعريب العلوم

**ترتب الجمعية المصرية لتعريب العلوم بعون ا تعالى لإقامة مؤتمرها السنوى السابع لتعريب العلوم فى الفترة ١٣-١٥ ذو القعدة ١٤٢١هـ (٧-٩ فبراير ٢٠٠١م) بعنوان:**

## تعريب العلوم فى منظومة التنمية القومية

محاور المؤتمر:

١. تقييم التعليم بالعربية فى الكليات غير المعربة.
٢. تقييم أداء الشعب التى تدرس بغير العربية فى الكليات المعربة.
٣. تقييم أداء خريجى المدارس العربية ومدارس اللغات الأجنبية فى الجامعات.
٤. تقييم تدريس العلوم باللغة العربية وباللغات الأجنبية فى التعليم العام.
٥. تقييم استخدام كل من منظومتى الأرقام المشرقية والمغربية فى الكتابة العربية.
٦. تقييم استخدام الحروف العربية فى الرموز العلمية.
٧. أسلوب تدريس اللغة العربية واللغات الأجنبية فى الجامعات لغير المتخصصين فيها.
٨. حصر واقع التعريب فى مختلف المعاهد والمؤسسات.
٩. تعريب التعليم والعولمة.
١٠. اللغة والهوية.
١١. معوقات التعريب.
١٢. اقتصاديات تعريب التعليم العام والجامعى.

١٣. إعداد رامج علمية تعليمية باللغة العربية.
١٤. تيسير استخدام اللغة العربية فى شبكة المعلومات العالمية (الإنترنت) بالنسبة للبريد الإلكترونى وآليات البحث وغيرها من المجالات.
١٥. تعريب اللغات الحاسوبية.
١٦. استخدام تقنيات المعلومات فى منظومة التعريب.

## مواعيد مهمة:

| | |
|---|---|
| استلام نص البحث كاملاً حتى | ١ يناير ٢٠٠١م |
| إعلام الباحث بقبول البحث حتى | ١٥ يناير ٢٠٠١م |

## كما يتضمن المؤتمر حلقتى نقاش تعالجان القضيتين التاليتين:

١. الجدوى الاقتصادية لمنظومة تعريب العلوم.
٢. لغة التعليم فى المدارس التجريبية والخاصة.

ترسل أوراق العمل لهاتين الحلقتين فى حدود ١٠٠٠ كلمة فى موعد غايته ١ يناير ٢٠٠١م

جميع المراسلات بخصوص المؤتمر ترسل إلى:

أ.د. عبد الحافظ حلمى محمد
رئيس ا معية ا صرية لتعريب العلوم
ص. ب ٥٣٠١ غرب مصر الجديدة، القاهرة ١١٧٧١
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# PREFACE

The activities of Cairo Linguists Group have continued as usual with a number of very interesting papers which were presented at our meetings throughout the academic year 1999/2000. We hope to publish some of those in a later issue.

The current issue of ***Al-Logha*** contains four papers presented at our meetings in previous years and one prepared for a conference abroad. All five papers are concerned with Egyptian Arabic but focus on very different aspects.

Gunvor Mejdell explores a particular aspect of diglossia in Egypt, namely the formal register of spoken Arabic as used by some well-known Egyptian personalities. Her conclusions concerning the extent and type of mixed features occurring in these recorded speeches should be of interest to the student of Arabic linguistics in general and dialectology and diglossia in particular.

Madiha Doss presents a historical analysis of reported speech (in French), comparing forms occurring in medieval French (distinct from the rules of modern French), Egyptian-Arabic chronicles of the Ottoman period and forms found in present-day newspapers. Her conclusion about these "hybrid" forms is that they are evidence of a close link to oral communication and its lack of distance to the events portrayed.

Humphrey Davies throws more light on the history of Egyptian colloquial Arabic through his scholarly examination of an entertaining 17$^{th}$ century text which is one of the most detailed and extensive sources of the spoken form of Arabic in that period.

Mohamed Rakhawi's in his study of a particular aspect of oral communication in Egypt adopts the perspective of the psycholinguist, attempting to discover patterns of meaning in apparently meaningless utterances. His study focuses on expressions frequently inserted in every-day speech (ألفـاظ الاسـتعانة or "backers") which make a variety of appeals to the interlocutor in order to establish an atmosphere favourable for communication.

Lastly, Jehan Allam gives us a sociolinguistic angle in her study of the new vocabulary introduced by young people. She demonstrates how this special slang serves as an identity marker for a certain age group, which distinguishes them from the rest of the Egyptian speech community.

Wherever Arabic is used in transcription we have adopted the following system (except in names and tiles):

| | |
|---|---|
| ذ = dh | ح = H |
| ع = ، (Arabic comma) | خ = kh |
| غ = gh | ص = S |
| ش = sh | ض = D |
| ث = th | ط = T |
| hamza = ' (apostrophe) | ظ = Z (colloquial) or DH (standard) |
| long vowels = doubled (aa) | ق = q |

Gerda Mansour

Al-Logha , 2 , 2000

# ASPECTS OF FORMAL SPOKEN ARABIC IN EGYPT - *LUGHA WUSTA* OR *LUGHAT AL-MUTHAQQAFIIN.* A VIEW FROM THE NORTH.[1]

Gunvor Mejdell,
University of Oslo, Norway

## مظاهر من لغة ا ثقف مصر. نظرة من الشمال.

يقوم هذا البحث بدراسة مظاهر من اللغة الوسـطى أو لغـة ا ـثقف ، هـذا ا ستوى اللغوي الذي يلقبه البحث با طاب ا مزوج. يعـرض البحـث الأنـواع ا ختلفة من ا زج اللغوي الذي ينتج عن ا مـع مـا بـ الفصـحى والعاميـة نفس العبارة أو نفس ا ـوار. ومـن النتـائج الـ ـرج ـا البحـث أن ا تحدث تلفون فيما بينهم استخدامهم اللغوي، فهناك مـن يلجـأ إ نسـبة أعلى من التعب ات الفصحى بينمـا يلجـأ الآخـرون إ ـزون العاميـة مـن مفردا ا وتركيبا ا الصرفية والنحوية.

وإن كانت لغة ا ثقف أو اللغة الوسطى تفتقـد إ وحـدة الكيـان اللازمـة لاعتبارها طاً لغوياً موحداً إلا أن التبـادل ا سـتمر الـذي ـري علـى ألسـنة ا تحدث ياة اليومية وكذلك من خلال وسائل الإعـلام بإمكانـه أن لـق كياناً لغوياً موحداً يعتمد على أسس ومعاي تزداد ثبوتاً مـع مـرور الـزمن، وأمـا عن طبيعة هذه ا عاي ، فمن ا توقـع أن تنتمـي ا فـردات إ الفصـحى، بينمـا تنتمي التركيبات النحوية والصرفية إ العاميـة مثـل مـا هـو متبـع معظـم ا الات لغة ا ثقف .

This paper will discuss aspects of language use in Egypt, with special focus on spoken performance in academic settings - what is

[1] This is an adapted version of a talk presented to the CAIRO LINGUISTS' GROUP in November 1997. Some of the same data is treated in Mejdell 1996 and 1999.

commonly labeled *lugha wusTa* or *lughat al-muthaqqafiin*, and what I prefer to call "mixed discourse". This subject has interested me for many years - since I wrote my thesis on the applicability of the concept of diglossia to the modern Arabic language situation (in Norwegian, 1980).[2] The linguistic situation in the Arabic-speaking world, with its 'diglossia', *al-izdiwaag al-lughawi*, has all the more intrigued me, as my own linguistic background in Norway is very different. I believe the sociolinguistic situation in Norway and in the Arab countries are, typologically speaking, at opposite ends of a continuum (at least when it comes to languages I know) with regard to standard norms and language policies. While the standard variety in Arabic represents a norm not naturally spoken by any segment of society, and has been preserved throughout the centuries practically unchanged in its phonology and morphology, Norway has two standard varieties, both based on spoken varieties of the urban and rural population respectively, and official language policies aim at ontinuously adapting the standard norms to developments in the spoken varieties.[3] On the other hand, what our communities have in common are heated debates on linguistic issues, on norms and reforms - and, lately, on how to respond to the expanding role of the international language par excellence, English. Such debates, whether they concern internal or external issues, tend to reflect deeper sociocultural, and even political, concerns in society, which make

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[2] Of great inspiration for my study have been professor Elsaid Muhammad Badawi at the American University of Cairo and associate professor Madiha Doss at Cairo University. Many other Egyptian friends have also been kind to discuss and comment on these issues throughout the years.

[3] Those who might be interested in more information about the "unique" Norwegian situation are referred to Trudgill 1974: 149-56.

them all the more important, and interesting, to both participants and observers.[4]

## *Functions of FuSHa and ʻAmmiyya*

Separate functional domains of the vernacular (in the following: Egyptian Arabic = EA or *ʿammiyya*, and the standard language (Standard Arabic = SA, or *fuSHa)* have been schematized in Western literature by Ferguson (1959) and others. The functions have been largely related to the dimension of informal — formal, where EA is unmarked (i.e. what is expected) for informal functions, and SA is unmarked for formal functions. The varieties may also be functionally related to *medium* or *mode* - on this dimension EA is unmarked for (most) spoken functions and SA is unmarked for (most) written functions. Important to acknowledge, with regard to both functional dimensions, however, is the creative aspect of language use: speakers (and writers) not only respond to norm expectations defined by the features of a given context in an automatic, role-given way (by using a socially and culturally unmarked language form) — they may choose *not* to accommodate to sociocultural norms. By using marked (not normally expected) language forms for the given situation or context, they contribute to define the social relationships involved, or, at least, make a social or cultural statement as to their role in, or attitude towards, the situation/context.

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[4] Cf. the interesting issue of *QaDaaya fikriyya* 17-18 (1997); Farag Allah 1996; Doss (1995)

This last point I believe is nicely illustrated by an excerpt from Egyptian TV[5] where Farouq Shousha (FS) conducts an interview with Yusuf Idris (YI):

YI : ... yaʿni hiyya kanit bi-titkallim ʿan fatra muʿayyana fi l-madiina wa-mish ʿaarif eeh / waaHid bi-yruuH fi l-`aTr kull-i yoom / fa bi-y`aabil waHda fa bi-tansha` il-qiSSa yaʿni Hawaadith ti`dar tisammii-ha ʿala Hawaaf al-mugtamaʿ

FS : yaʿni `a-lam takun turiidu t-tawagguh ila l-insaan al-miSri al-Haqiiqi fi Huduud waʿyi-k wa-fahmi-k fii dhaalik al-waqt

YI: la / mish

FS: insaan aakhar / gheer allazi yaktub ʿan-hu al-aakharuun / wa-bit-taali taʿbiir fanni mukhtalif ʿan allazi yaktubu-hu al-aakharuun

YI: maZbuut / bass / li-`innu fiʿlan il-qiSSa ʿand-i laysat adaat qiraa`a fa-qaT innama adaat taghyiir ʿilmi / zayyi-ma ´ult inn-iHna daakhil il-Haraka l-adabiyya mil-Haraka al-waTaniyya / yaʿni / ana kunt ʿaawiz aghayyar al-mugtamaʿ

I suggest that both interviewer (FS) and interviewee (YI) are signalling something extra to the message, and neither of them adapts,

[5] Recorded from channel 2, 17.3.81

or accommodates, to the stylistic level of the other. We see (hear) that Shousha insists on keeping a level of formality or perhaps rather of cultivated speech, while Idris sticks to a "folksier" style and keeps going on in EA - his shift 'upwards' in the clause /laysat adaat qiraa´a faqaT/ seems to be motivated by emphasis and does not represent a general change of style.

Also in writing, using marked language forms (EA in an expected SA context) may have special functions, produce special effects - typically humoristic or ironical. Let me just refer to two incidents I observed in the Egyptian press late in 1997. The first concerns the weekly newspaper *al-Dustour* (which was closed down in spring 1998) - which, contrary to normal journalistic practice, not only used occasional vernacular forms in columns and feature articles of a 'light' kind, but also would frequently introduce EA in 'serious' reports and in bold headlines. Am I right in interpreting this as an act of defiance, as a challenge to authority by linguistic means? The second concerns an issue of the newspaper *al-Shaιb* (30.12.1997), which, reporting on statements by Shaykh Tantawi of al-Azhar on relations with Israel, consistently rendered the shaykh´s comments and responses in a rather broad *ιammiyya* with hints of a rural background - while the interviewer was rendered as speaking more or less correct SA. Hardly an act of reverence…

## *Intermediate forms - mixing the varieties.*

So much here for creative uses of the *fuSHa* /*ιammiyya* linguistic contrast, which native speakers may exploit to various ends and

purposes (not always accessible to the outside observer, of course)[6]. This is one aspect of the interaction of the two basic varieties. The other aspect I shall focus on is the mixing of the varieties in contexts which are not specifically marked for the one or the other variety. Ferguson himself mentioned that the "communicative tensions which arise in the diglossic situation may be resolved by the use of relatively uncodified, unstable, intermediate forms of the language"(1959:332). There has since been increasing awareness among observers of the language situation in Egypt (and most Arabic-speaking communities) that the functional dimension as well as the linguistic dimension should rather be perceived as continuums than as functional dichotomies and discrete varieties. Educated speakers (i.e. those who have had access to *fuSHa*) will tend to use *fuSHa* features and items increasingly as they elevate their speech in a more formal context.

This is not, of course, specific for Arabic. In all language communities there is socio-stylistic variation - involving standard and vernacular varieties. Shifting, or moving 'upwards' toward a more formal style of speech involves using more features and items from the standard (be it a standard based on a spoken variety, a separate non-spoken – high - variety, or a foreign language functioning as standard variety in a community) - which is associated with (high) culture and education. In communities where the standard is based on (or for other reasons is structurally very close to) spoken varieties (usually of the urban educated), the means of style raising amounts to using more formal lexical items / vocabulary as well as avoiding certain typical colloquialisms. In Egypt the urban educated will shift

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6 The rhetorical use of *fusHa* and *'ammiyya* in president Nasser´s political speeches has been studied by European scholars, cf. Diem 1974, Holes 1993, Mazraani 1997.

from their normal spoken variety towards the standard high variety not only by choosing *fuSHa* lexical items, but also by adopting phonological features, grammatical words and morphemes from the standard system. Only rarely will speakers shift completely to normative *fuSHa*, unless there is an underlying written text which they perform orally. Mostly the result is a mode of speaking which involves mixing of EA and SA features as well as switching between stretches of either variety.

I believe this mode of speaking, which I refer to as *mixed discourse*, is felt to be the appropriate mode on many occasions. It takes care of signalling to the public that the person speaking is educated and cultured but neither pompous nor pedantic. An example of mixed discourse is the following excerpt taken from the cassette recording of Nagib Mahfouz: *mishwaar Hayaatii*

> u-natiigit it-tarbiya di / wa-law anna-ha / bi-tuHaqqiq / nagaaHan / wa-stiqaama / innama / bi-tuSiib ish-shakhSiyya / fi stiqlal-ha / az-zaati / wa-fi / gur´it-ha / li-daraga kbiira / yimkin / il-giil / iza kaan / il-asaar as-sayyi´a lam tubdi fii-h / bil-quwa fa-da ba´a / bi-faDl / she´ / la yarga، lil-usra u-l-madrasa / da faDl as-sawra nafs-aha / illi khalaqit al-insaan al-miSri fi zaalik al-waqt / khalqan gadiidan / ga،alat-hu yastahiin/ bi-gamii، / at-taqaliid / as-sayyi´a / as-saabiq(a)

In this passage the honoured author blends *fuSHa* and *،ammiyya* to an extreme extent (at least it appears so to a non-native observer): EA demonstratives and relatives (*da*, *di* and *illi*), EA *bi*- + SA verbal forms, SA verbal forms + EA endings (*it*), SA negatives and even *i،raab* in object function, and so on.

## *Badawi´s model - levels along the continuum*

The Egyptian linguist Elsaid Badawi has made a most important and well known contribution to the study of linguistic variation in the Egyptian language community (Badawi 1973). He operates with a continuum ranging from "pure" *fuSHa* to "plain" *ʿammiyya*, with levels of language use shading into each other like the colours of the rainbow. Social and pragmatic variables like education and "setting" are linked to linguistic variables, providing a socio-stylistic scale of language use, which the author divides into 5 main levels - *fuSHa* features diminishing and *ʿammiyya* features increasing as one moves down the continuum:

(1) fuSHa al-turaath

(2) fuSHa al-ʿaSr

(3) ʿammiyyat al-muthaqqafiin

(4) ʿammiyyat al-mutanawwiriin

(5) ʿammiyyat al-ummiyyiin

In Badawi's model, the two basic varieties meet at level (3), *fuSHa* and *ʿammiyya* features being rather equally represented. Still, there must be something that motivates labelling level (3) *ʿammiyya*. Are there linguistic elements that are perceived to affect the change of level? Badawi is quite vague with regard to this - it appears to be the sum total of *fuSHa* and *ʿammiyya* elements respectively that produce the shift between levels (2) and (3). A functional definition actually

appears to be more decisive[7]. However, Badawi does give a few clues as to what features may matter more than others. He discusses (p.11ff) various variants that may be heard of the following sentence:

هذا موضع يهم كل الأباء و ا ر،

This sentence is rendered in three different variants — to exemplify the gradual shifting of elements decreasing its *fuSHa*-ness and increasing its *ʿa:mmiyya*-ness moving down the scale:

(1) *haadhaa mawDuuʿun yuhimmu kulla l-´aabaa´i wal-murabbiin*

This first variant reflects the orthoepic *fuSHa* norm established by the philologists.

(2) *haazaa mawDuuʿ yahumm kulli l-´aabaa´ wal-murabbiin*

This variant is affected by the shift of interdental /dh/ to /z/, to drop of short vowel endings in context (*waSlan*), and the use of EA epenthetic *-i* (or, alternatively, EA definite article *il-* ) after *kull*. The verb has a SA shape, but it does not have a correct vowelization (*DabT SaHiiH*) for this meaning. General consensus/usage today (*al-ʿurf al-lughawi al-muttafaq ʿalay-hi fi l-waqt al-HaaDir*), Badawi

[7]"[…] it is the limit where *'ammiyya*, in moving upwards towards *fuSHa*, reaches a degree where it becomes capable of expressing, orally, contemporary culture". This functional, or sociocultural, definition - the language use of those who have some education when it comes to express cultural topics in discussions, talking about abstract issues, science, art and literature. Thus - it carries the same cultural function (*gharaD*) as *fuSHa al-ʿaSr*, and has the same expressive/communicative possibilities. But whereas *fuSHa al-ʿaSr* is basically a written variety, and the ability to speak *fuSHa* extemporaneously and with ease being restricted to a small minority, the cultural functions carried by *fuSHa al-ʿaSr* in writing, is carried by *'ammiyyat al-muthaqqafi:n in speech* (p.150).

claims, still recognizes the sentence as being inside the range of . The significant feature here seems to be that the verb has a form which is in accordance with SA morphology, although it is not the correct form in this context/functional meaning.

(3) *haazaa mawDuuɩ yihimm kulli l-´aabaa´ wal-murabbiin*

With the third sentence we are, according to Badawi, moving from the domain of *fuSHa* into the domain of *ɩammiyya*: "The degree of difference between sentence (1) and (3) has increased so that it is no longer possible to consider them as belonging to the same category (*min nawɩin waaHid*)." The only shift here, however, compared to (2), is the change in the verb morphology to an unequivocally EA form. And that seems to be the decisive point here: "This goes back to the degree of transformation which has affected the verb *yuhimm*. Although it was changed in (2) from *yuhimm* to *yahumm*, the change was not considered a sufficient deviation from the *fuSHa* norm. However, the shift to *yihimm* is "a change that leads to the placing of the two sentences at two distant degrees/steps on the 'linguistic ladder', so they end up on a different level from each other"(p.13).

This, to me, is an interesting judgement by a native speaker linguist. It suggests that not all features have equal value as stylistic markers. In the example above the force, or stylistic value, of the verbal shape seems to override the effect of the presence of a SA demonstrative pronoun.

### *Variation in mixed discourse in an academic setting.*

My investigation of academic discourse - based on a) recordings from panel presentations on higher education in Egypt (referred to

below as AUC speakers) and b) introductions to a literary seminar, *nadwa adabiyya* (referred to as NA speakers) - shows that speakers respond differently, have different verbal strategies in the same, or similar, contexts. Not only are there great individual differences in the proportions of *fuSHa* and *ιammiyya* features and items. There are also differences in the overall discourse structure, with some speakers shifting between longer stretches of *fuSHa*-oriented and *ιammiyya*-oriented speech, while other speakers more evenly mix the two varieties throughout their discourse.

Certain patterns of variation do emerge, however, from a closer analysis of the distribution of SA and EA features in my data. One of these patterns confirms findings from research on variety-mixing in various kinds of language situations - bilingual, standard-with-dialects, and also noted by earlier research on Arabic diglossic code interaction. This concerns mixed forms on a word level, and may be formulated as a one-directional constraint on combinations of stems and suffixes, as proposed by Schmidt (1974) (non-occurring forms marked with *):

| stem + (eye) + | suffix (dual) | |
|---|---|---|
| ιayn | -ayn | SA + SA |
| ιin | -een | EA + EA |
| ιayn | -een | SA + EA |
| *ιin | -ayn | *EA + SA |

| stem + (said) + | suffix (perf/3sf) | |
|---|---|---|
| qaal | -at | SA+SA |
| ’aal | -it | EA+EA |
| qaal | -it | SA+EA |
| *’aal | -at | *EA+SA |

This means, that in mixed forms, SA/ *fuSHa* stems may combine with EA/*ιammiyya* suffixes, but not the other way: *ιammiyya* stems do not occur with *fuSHa* suffixes. It may alternatively be formulated in terms

of constraints on mixing between lexical items and grammatical morphemes, and then be subsumed under the "dominant-language hypothesis" (Petersen 1988:486):

> "The dominant-language hypothesis states that in word-internal code-switching, grammatical morphemes of the DOMINANT language may co-occur with lexical morphemes of either the dominant or the non-dominant language. However, grammatical morphemes of the NONDOMINANT language may co-occur only with lexical morphemes of the non-dominant language."

The dominant language (or variety) being the most deeply entrenched, usually first (naturally) acquired language/variety, it seems reasonable to postulate that *ʿammiyya* represents the dominant variety in Egyptian diglossic interaction.

The following examples from my data illustrate this point:

- wa-yufakkir fi ʿalaqt-u bi-zamilt-u wa-kayfa anna izaaHit haadha l-ab aw mawt-u sa-tu´addi ila mashaakil kathiira bi-nisbaa-lu (NA 2)

- mas´alit anna-na tagaawazna … (AUC 2)

- il-´ibdaaʿ fi gawhar-u anna-ka tastaTiiʿ … (AUC 2)

In these clauses, the speakers use lexical items which are SA or shared (SA and EA), while the grammatical morphemes for pronoun suffixes and feminine *iDaafa* endings are EA.

┌ b-aʿtaqid inn-u bi-haadha n-naSS bi-yadkhul fii munaaZarat al-mawaaqif wal-iqnaʿaat illi bi-tukawwin-ha magmuuʿat an-nuSuuS (NA 1)

Here we have a combination of EA bi- and SA verbal forms. These are very frequent in my data, even in otherwise SA-oriented speech as in this case (and as we saw in the Nagib Mahfouz excerpt above: *bi-tuHaqqiq*, *bi-tuSiib*) and may reflect a need with speakers for explicit indicative mode marking - the y-imperfect in many contexts lending itself to different interpretations in SA and EA.

Another interpretation of the high frequency of occurrence of *bi-* and which also involves EA variants of pronoun suffixation and feminine ending -it, could be that these are unstressed, phonologically non-salient clitics, and therefore have limited value as stylistic markers. In other words they are not salient as EA markers, and have little effect on the overall perception of more elevated style. A counterexample would, of course, be the imperfect verbal prefix - which, as we have seen above, Badawi claimed was the decisive linguistic feature in assigning the clause to level (2) (*fuSHa al-ʿaSr*) or (3) (*ʿammiyyat al-muthaqqafiin).* There may indeed be something special about the imperfect prefix - a tighter cohesion with the lexical stem than what is the case for the perfect suffix. In SA the imperfect prefix also carries a semantic/lexical value in cases where it distinguishes Form I (*yafʿil)* from Form IV (*yufʿil*). In the following example, the prefix is SA *yu-* while the suffix (3 mpl.) is EA *-u* (for SA *-uuna*):

li-´ann-u bi-Hukm / Tabiiʿit ha´ulaa´i n-naas hum / yushakkilu / yaʿni / al-nukhba (AUC 4)

A further comment to this is that while we postulated above that constraints on mixing allowed for SA stem/lexical item + EA suffix/grammatical morpheme, so we have, for instance, forms like *qaalit* and *istaTaaɩit* whereas imperfect mixed forms **tiquul* and **tistaTiiɩ* are less likely to occur. I have actually come across very few occurrences in my data of SA verbal stem with an EA imperfect prefix.[8] With regard to grammatical (function) words, although 'my' speakers vary greatly in the use of SA and EA variants of the selected items (demonstratives, negatives, relatives and complementizers), there is a clear dominance of SA/*fuSHa* variants of the demonstrative adjective (*haadha*/*haaza*) and SA negative constructions - whereas the EA relative *illi* occurs quite frequently, alternating with forms of *alladhi*/*allazi*. Likewise, EA *inn(-u)* competes well with SA *ˊan* and *ˊanna*. I suggest there is a hierarchy of preference among these grammatical words, and that some have more stylistic value than others.[9] The same kind of asymmetry applies (as claimed for bound morphemes above): SA grammatical words are followed only by SA lexical items, while the EA variants may occur with EA and SA lexical items.[10] A few examples will illustrate the 'flexible' use of EA variants:

ր mushkilit it-taɩliim inn-u lam tataHaddad Suura waaDiHa (AUC 2)

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[8] Feedback from native speakers is most welcome…

[9] I discuss these features in Mejdell (forthcoming).

[10] Only marginally does this apply to negatives, however, and never when negating a verb. Eid 1988 convincingly argues that this is due to the structural incompatibility of EA and SA systems of negation and tense marking.

┌ sawfa / naqra´ / li-kathiir min al-kitabaat / illi min haadha n-naw، / (NA 1)

┌ bi-tatamayyaz bi-anna-ha nuqla Haqiiqatan / ،an shughl bahaa´ Taahir / w-inna al-qiSaS illi mawguuda fi haadhihi l-magmuu،a al-ukhra (NA 3)

┌ aakhir Haaga wifqan liz-zaman mish wifqan li-ma yanbaghi an yakuun (AUC 3)

## *Concluding remarks*

I may not have demonstrated sufficiently in this paper the extent of individual variation in my data - in response to same/similar contexts and audiences. All 'my' speakers shift between and mix features of *fuSHa* and *،ammiyya* in their discourse - but to largely different extents and in different ways. The wide range of variability that characterizes these intermediate styles is evidence of wide tolerance as to what is acceptable. Judging from the case studies I am studying, *lugha wusTa*, *lughat al-muthaqqafiin*, or mixed discourse ("the beloved child has many names", we say) does not (yet?) appear to have the internal cohesion one normally associates with 'variety'. Therefore I prefer the labels 'modes of speaking' or 'intermediate/mixed forms/styles of the language'.

However, we might expect the constant interaction - directly and via oral media - of speakers producing some kind of elevated mixed style to lead to evolving norms of language use for this kind of context. Patterns and tendencies shared by individual styles may therefore be indicative of the features that may eventually characterize

these norms: the lexical items are dominantly SA, though frequently adapted to EA syllable patterns (producing an unmistakably 'Egyptian flavour'). As for the grammatical items which I have mentioned here, we may tentatively predict that preverbal *bi*-, EA pronoun suffixation, *illi* and *inn(-u)* will prevail as dominant variants together with the SA variants of *haadha/haaza* and negatives.

I wish to end, however, by stating my conviction that a community may just as well be served by continued flexible, unstable 'modes of speaking' - in this case drawing on the rich resources of the Arabic linguistic continuum, exploiting it with all the verbal creativity Egyptians are famous for.

## *ADDENDUM* [11]

In the conclusion to her enlightening paper on formal spoken Arabic, Mejdell advances some reflections on the norms which would seem to evolve from the frequent use made by speakers of the “elevated mixed style”. She writes that “patterns and tendencies shared by individual styles may be indicative of the features that may eventually characterize these norms” and she lists among these tendencies the dominance of Standard Arabic lexical items; whereas for grammatical features the tendency would be for them to be drawn from Egyptian Arabic. Among these EA grammatical features she lists the verbal prefix *bi*, as well as the relative *illi*. In the following note I would like to reinforce her hypothesis on the evolving norms which could emerge from the speech variety she describes.

[11] The following note was received by the author after completing this article and is added at her special request.

A number of texts in the Egyptian literary production were written with the aim of diminishing the distance between *fuSHa* and *ɩammiyya.* Among these texts, belonging to the genres of drama as well as of novel we can list a few. The first was Tawfik al Hakim's play *Al-Safqa* (1956) in which he tried to compose a written text which could be rendered both in Standard and in colloquial Arabic if read aloud. More recently two novels aimed at the same objective. The first is *Bayt Serri,* or *Beet Serri* if read in colloquial, (1981), the second is Fathi Imbabi's *Maraaɩi l-qatl* "Killing Fields"(1994). In both cases the authors recognize the phenomenon of diglossia and try to get around it and find a remedy to what they consider as a defect of Arabic. In this short note I shall briefly refer to the first of these novels, *Beet Sirri*.

The novel was written in 1981 by a legal consultant, Othman Sabri who at an earlier stage, as he states in his introduction, was in favor of the colloquial. In defense of writing in the spoken language he wrote in 1965 a novel entitled رحلة    النيل "Promenade on the Nile".

At a later stage his linguistic concern changed direction and focused on the creation  a unified language for both reading and writing in order to combat diglossia. Diglossia which is defined by the author in the following terms: كلنا نسعى للقضاء على ذلك الداء العضال اللي بيقسم أمتنا لقسم : ا تعلم   وغ  ا تعلم   ونقصد بـه ازدواجيـة أو ثنائية اللغة واختلاف لغة الكتابة عن لغة الكلام... "we all strive to combat this chronic disease which divides our nation into two parts: the educated and the uneducated, by this we mean dualism of language and the split which exists between the language of writing and that of speech…"

In order to fulfil this aim Othman Sabri uses in his new novel Beet Serri what he coins اللغة العربيـة الحديثـة "The modern Arabic language". As the reader has already noticed through the use of the preceding quotation, the choice of register follows closely the author's claim of adopting a "modern Arabic language" similar to the one used by educated speakers. In this quotation we note both the use of the verbal prefix bi-, as well as the invariable form of the relative pronoun illi, precisely those features given as an example by Mejdell as possible EA variants of SA grammatical features. These two features among others are seen by the author of the novel as representative of lughat al-muthaqqafiin. They also qualify for adoption by speakers of other Arab states, unlike the negative form ma…sh which the author refrains from using because it is not common to other dialects, as he states.

Among some of the other features listed by Othman Sabri which he uses in his novel and recommends in his new standard of the modern Arabic language are the following:

- abstention from the use of tanwiin, all terms appearing in the pausal form,
- generalization of the ending -iin for all cases,
- suppression of the nun from the imperfect verbal ending, (yaktubu instead of yaktubuuna)
- suppression of the dual ending except in nouns,
- suppression of the feminine gender ending, or nun in-niswa.

These are only some of a longer list of features brought forward by Othman Sabri which he recommends as a new standard. Even though languages rarely evolve according to the will of reformers, it nevertheless seems both interesting and important that writers adopt a standard based on the observation of real speech and, indeed, lughat al-muthaqafiin is real and lively speech.

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# ANALYSE COMPARÉE D’UNE FORME HYBRIDE DU DISCOURS RAPPORTÉ

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**دراسة مقارنة لبناء خاص من ا طاب ا نقول**
يتناول هذا البحث بناء خاصاً لأسلوب ا طاب ا نقول. فا طاب ا نقول صور تلفة، منها ا طاب ا باشر وا طاب غ ا باشر ا ر، وأما عن البناء الذي يتناوله هذا البحث بالتحليل فيتمثل أن تبدأ ا ملة بالأسلوب غ ا باشر يلي ذلك مباشرة ودون هيد، صيغة الأسلوب ا باشر. انطلقت الدراسة من اولة رصد هذا البناء نصوص تعود إ فترات زمنية تلفة. فيظهر هذا البناء ا اص حوليات من القرن السابع عشر وهي نصوص من العصر العثما تتسم لغتها با لط ما ب صيغ فصحى وصيغ عامية. ومن الغريب أن يظهر نفس هذا البناء الكتابة الصحفية ا عاصرة مصر. وترصد الدراسة كذلك هذه الظاهرة فرنسية القرون الوسطى. ينتهي البحث حاولة شرح و ليل هذا البناء اللغوي.

La question du discours rapporté intéresse aussi bien le domaine des sciences sociales et plus particulièrement celui de la sociologie et de l’analyse du discours politique, que celui de la linguistique. Ceci est vrai puisque la façon de rapporter le discours d’Autrui reflète la manière que l’on a d’écouter, d’appréhender, de situer, et de juger l’Autre. Cet Autre peut être un individu, ou un groupe auquel on se rallie ou auquel on s’oppose, dans un rapport interpersonnel ou dans des rapports distanciés qui peuvent se réaliser entre nations ou représentants de nations. Par la façon dont est rapporté le discours de cet Autre, on découvre la manière par laquelle locuteur se situe, s’associe ou au contraire se distancie par rapport à ses propos. Les verbes de parole qui introduisant les différentes formes de discours

rapporté ne sont qu'un moyen parmi d'autres qui dévoilent l'attitude du locuteur vis-à-vis de ces propos. Prenant nos exemples au français, il est simple de constater que certains verbes de parole (comme affirmer, déclarer, confier, prétendre) sont teintés d'une valeur modale qui exprime l'attitude du locuteur par rapport à l'énoncé rapporté. Ces verbes de parole, sont d'ailleurs devenus plus nombreux par rapport aux époques antérieures de la langue où on ne comptait que « dire, répondre et faire ».

Le discours rapporté constitue l'un des thèmes essentiels abordés dans *Le marxisme et la philosophie du langage*, ouvrage dans lequel M. Bakhtine a expliqué l'importance de l'étude du discours rapporté. En effet, pareille étude «nous donne des indications, non pas sur les processus subjectivo-psychologique passagers et fortuits qui se déroulent dans «l'âme » du récepteur, mais sur les tendances sociales stables caractéristiques de l'appréhension active du discours d'autrui qui se manifestent dans les formes de la langue »[1]

La présente étude constitue une partie d'un plus vaste projet portant sur les diverses formes de discours rapporté en arabe. Comme en français, il existe en arabe le discours direct, le discours indirect ainsi que le discours indirect libre qui s'est développé dans la littérature contemporaine. Mais à côté de ces trois, il existe des formes intermédiaires comme celle traitée dans cette étude et que je désignerai comme la forme hybride.

Mon intérêt pour la question du discours rapporté a été suscité par plus d'un facteur. Il y a plusieurs années, travaillant sur des textes

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[1] Mikhail Bakhtine, *Le marxisme et la philosophie du langage, essai d'application de la méthode sociologique en linguistique*, p. 163, 1977, Paris.

arabes d'Egypte remontant au 17e siècle, certaines particularités dans des formes de discours rapporté me sont apparues. Dans certains cas, ces formes étaient difficiles à saisir et à classifier comme appartenant soit au discours direct ou indirect. Plus tard, j'ai commencé à observer puis à recueillir ces formes particulières ou, disons plutôt irrégulières, dans la presse arabe contemporaine d'Egypte. Finalement, la question du discours rapporté a toujours été un souci résultant de mon expérience d'enseignement du français. En effet, la difficulté que manifestent les étudiants arabophones dans la maîtrise de la fonction du langage qui consiste à rapporter les propos d'autrui est assez générale et a été constatée par divers enseignants chargés de l'enseignement du français langue étrangère. Les difficultés manifestées par les étudiants dans l'acquisition de cette fonction sont peut-être plus grandes par rapport au français, puisque dans cette langue les modifications exigées dans le passage du discours direct au discours indirect sont assez nombreuses et complexes, elles concernent une modification dans la forme du pronom et de certains déictiques aussi bien que des changements dans le choix des temps et dans certains cas dans le mode du verbe, selon un système complexe de concordance des temps. On ajoutera que, par opposition à ce qui se passe en français, dans la langue arabe les modifications exercées sur l'énoncé dans son passage du discours direct au discours indirect sont mineures.

Après une brève introduction sur le discours rapporté en arabe, l'étude se centrera sur la forme particulière objet de cette étude et que nous nommerons après B. Cerquiligni, la forme hybride. Elle sera observée dans des textes d'ancien français puis d'arabe du 17e siècle et contemporain. Pour terminer sur une tentative d'explication de ce phénomène syntaxique, explication qui sera plutôt une série d'hypothèses ou de facteurs éventuels.

## 1. *Eléments pour une étude du discours rapporté en arabe*

Le discours rapporté est à l'origine d'une vaste recherche dans le domaine de la linguistique, en effet, plus de 200 titres d'ouvrages et d'articles traitant de la question du «discours dans le discours » ont paru depuis 1960. On ne peut que regretter le fait que de toutes les contributions faites autour de ce problème linguistique crucial, aucune à ma connaissance, n'ait été consacrée à la langue arabe. Ceci est d'autant plus regrettable que le discours rapporté dans cette langue, mérite d'être décrit et analysé de façon particulière, puisque l'arabe étant une langue à deux codes (phénomène de la diglossie), la notion même de reproduction littérale des énoncés du discours direct reste une notion floue et difficile à saisir. En effet, un énoncé en arabe standard qui reprend un autre énoncé produit en arabe dialectal, peut-il être considéré comme sa reproduction littérale ? Et peut-on parler d'identité entre les deux énoncés ? Dans ce cas de figure, la variabilité est à la fois culturelle et linguistique, puisque la notion de différence (dialectal pour le parler ; standard pour l'écrit) dans la reproduction de l'énoncé est inséparable de la norme admise d'alternance codique de l'arabe et fait partie intégrante de la représentation que se fait la communauté arabophone de sa langue. Pour la majorité des locuteurs arabophones, la reproduction en arabe standard d'un énoncé produit en dialectal apparaît comme le comportement linguistique le plus commun et le plus acceptable. A ce propos, il serait utile de rappeler que le code choisi pour rapporter le discours direct dans le cadre de la production littéraire arabe a fait l'objet d'un vaste débat qui se poursuit jusqu'à nos jours. Nous n'aborderons cependant pas cet aspect de la question qui devrait être traitée séparément, puisque le transfert du «réel » en objet littéraire

est un phénomène fort complexe et qui dépasse la simple question de la représentation.

Si pour O. Jespersen et d'autres, le discours direct consiste à rapporter «les paroles exactes du locuteur (ou de l'écrivant) »[2], alors si nous prenons l'arabe en considération, on devrait modifier cette définition en précisant que le discours direct consiste à présenter les paroles du locuteur d'une manière qui *signifie ou qui implique ces paroles* mais sans la reprise textuelle des propos émis. C'est plutôt selon cette nouvelle définition que l'arabe userait du discours direct, puisque les paroles ou l'énoncé émis sont rarement reproduits littéralement par celui qui les rapporte. Dans la langue écrite, que ce soit dans les dialogues ou dans les citations, le registre utilisé pour le discours rapporté est plus souvent celui de l'arabe standard que celui de l'arabe dialectal. Pour un locuteur arabe, ces remarques semblent d'une grande évidence. Pourtant elles ne me paraissent pas redondantes ; bien au contraire, il semblerait qu'elles méritent d'être faites, et pour reprendre les paroles de B. Brecht : « Pour arriver à comprendre une chose connue, il est préférable de la sortir de sa normalité et de rompre l'habitude de la considérer comme se passant de commentaire ».

[2] Otto Jespersen, *The philosophy of grammar*, p. 290, 1965, New York.

## *2. Le discours rapporté en arabe au regard des notions de linguistique générale*

En linguistique générale, comme nous l'avons dit plus haut, le discours direct est le terme employé pour désigner la citation directe ou les mots mêmes employés par le locuteur ou l'écrivant. Pour formuler les choses autrement, le discours direct représente l'énoncé émis par le locuteur, sans modifications. Cette définition paraissant sans doute trop catégorique, certains auteurs y ont donc ajouté une nuance pour montrer que ce qui est considéré comme le **même** dans l'énoncé rapporté est sujet à discussion et est susceptible de varier selon les cultures[3] Comme nous l'avons dit plus haut, l'arabe est une des langues dans lesquels un point de vue relativiste s'impose en ce qui concerne l'analyse du discours rapporté. Ajoutons à cela, qu'en ce qui concerne l'arabe, la ponctuation qui est un des marqueurs du discours direct (les deux points ainsi que les guillemets) sont employés sporadiquement et non pas de manière systématique.

D'un autre côté, le discours indirect consiste en l'adaptation des paroles du locuteur original à la situation d'énonciation. Pour mentionner brièvement les contraintes grammaticales qui concernent cette catégorie grammaticale en arabe, rappelons que dans cette langue il ne se produit ni changement de temps, ni de mode dans le passage du discours direct au discours indirect mais seulement un changement dans la forme du pronom. La citation indirecte suit généralement un verbe de parole et elle est introduite par une conjonction (AN). Contrairement au discours direct dans lequel la

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[3] Florian Coulmas, « Reported speech : Some general issues », p. 2, dans *Direct and indirect speech,* sous la direction de Florian Coulmas, 1986, Berlin ; New York.

personne qui rapporte l'énoncé «prête sa voix au locuteur original » ; dans le discours indirect, la personne qui rapporte occupe l'avant de la scène et relate l'événement de son propre point de vue. A cause sans doute du phénomène de la diglossie, la question de la similarité ou de la différence entre les paroles du locuteur original et, celles de la personne qui les rapporte ne semble pas se poser avec la même acuité en arabe. La personne qui emploie le discours rapporté (direct ou indirect) ne reprend pas nécessairement les paroles mêmes qui ont été émises par le locuteur.

Cette étude traite d'une forme en particulier du discours rapporté, forme que l'on observe dans le mode de la langue écrite et que je nommerai la forme hybride, reprenant un terme employé par B. Cerquiligni dans son étude sur le français médiéval[4]. Il s'agit d'énoncés du discours rapporté qui débutent par le discours indirect puis qui sont brusquement interrompus par le discours direct[5]. Ce phénomène, comme je tenterai de le montrer, révèle de façon évidente l'ambiguïté du «point de vue adopté» vis-à-vis de ce qui est rapporté. En effet, dans la partie de l'énoncé rapporté au discours direct, le point de vue peut être celui du locuteur original, alors que dans la partie énoncée au discours indirect, ce serait celui de la personne qui rapporte. Cette forme hybride suscite nombre de problèmes et de questions intéressantes. Ainsi par exemple dans certains contextes, comme nous essayerons de le démontrer en ce qui

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[4] Bernard Cerquiligni, *La parole médiévale*, p.98, 1981, Paris.

[5] L'usage très irrégulier de la ponctuation en arabe standard d'Egypte se fait ressentir de façon plus manifeste dans cette partie du discours ceci, parce que les guillemets qui doivent accompagner la citation directe sont le plus souvent absents. Dans les cas observés et qui sont cités, ici l'absence de ponctuation a sans doute contribué au mélange des styles direct et indirect.

concerne l'arabe contemporain, cette ambiguïté peut entraîner des conséquences importantes en ce qui concerne la liberté d'expression. Mais une même forme ou un même phénomène linguistique dans des situations différentes (que ces différences soient de nature temporelle ou spatiale) n'est pas indicateur des mêmes valeurs. Ce même phénomène linguistique peut recevoir des interprétations différentes selon les situations d'énonciations et c'est la raison pour laquelle il serait intéressant d'étudier la forme hybride dans des contextes aussi différents que celui de l'arabe du 17e puis du 20e siècles en Egypte, ainsi que celui du Moyen Age français où cette forme a également été rélévée. Nous commencerons par décrire le phénomène de discours hybride à travers son apparition dans la prose romanesque française du Moyen Age.

## *3. Le discours rapporté et la forme hybride en ancien français*

Par bien des aspects le discours rapporté en ancien français se rapproche de cette figure du discours en français moderne. Ainsi par exemple, le discours direct est introduit par les mêmes marques. Le verbe de parole qui annonce les paroles d'autrui (dire et répondre) peut précéder l'énoncé ou apparaître dans une phrase incise (*Il dist al rei, Roland, Dame, fet il.…*,)[6].

Comme pour le discours direct, le discours indirect en ancien français est introduit par un verbe de parole, et la conjonction *que*, comme en français moderne, précède l'énoncé rapporté constitué par

[6] Jacqueline Picoche et Christiane Marchello-Nizia, *Histoire de la langue française*, p. 318, 1994, Paris.

une subordonnée. Une particularité du style de cette période est une construction dans laquelle le discours direct est quelquefois introduit par *que* : « li unt demandé Que «se ce n'estoit vérité, Que vieus tu c'on face de toi ? ». On peut penser que dans ces cas, la conjonction agit comme une sorte de signalisation de l'énoncé rapporté quelle que soit sa nature, directe ou indirecte.

Pour ce qui est de l'usage pronominal, c'est le pronom de la troisième qui remplace celui de la première personne. Le temps verbal de l'énoncé rapporté est adapté à celui du verbe de la principale[7].

Pour bien des aspects de la langue et du style, reconnaître la naissance d'un trait ou d'une fonction linguistique n'est pas chose aisée. Bien que dès l'ancien français on observe des marques de discours rapporté (au niveau des paroles ou des pensées), ces marques n'ont fait l'objet d'une prise de conscience qu'assez tard.

Le passage d'une forme de discours à l'autre (la forme hybride) n'est pas rare dans les romans du Moyen Age, et plus particulièrement le passage du discours indirect au discours direct dans les romans, lorsque les passages de discours indirect sont de quelque longueur. Il n'est pas rare, comme l'expliquent Picoche et Marchello-Nizia que «dans les romans en prose du 13e siècle, qu'un dialogue s'amorce au discours indirect, continue au discours direct et se termine à nouveau au discours indirect" comme dans l'exemple :

[7] Brigitte L.M. Bauer, « The verb in indirect speech in Old French, System in change » dans *Reported speech forms and functions of the verb,* Amsterdam, Philadelphia, 1996.

«La damoisele li aporte la manche … et li prie que il face moult d'armes a ce tournoiement por l'amor de lui, tant qu'ele tiegne sa manche a bien emploiee. Et si sachiez veraiement, sire, fer ele, que vos estes li premiers chevaliers a qui ge feisse onques requeste de riens…» Et il repont que por l'amor de li en fera il tant que ja n'en devra estre blasmez, Mort Artu, 14)[8].

Selon B. Cerquiligni ce phénomène trouverait son explication dans le système de la prose et exprimerait «une tendance à la ré-énonciation, conséquence elle-même d'une volonté de cerner la parole dans un système de repères (locuteur-allocutaire-énoncé)»[9]. En d'autres termes, le rapporteur du discours ressent le besoin de reprendre les termes de l'énonciation et de manifester son «je» par rapport à un « tu » ou un « vous » puisque, la finalité ou la fonction de la forme grammaticale du discours rapporté consiste bien en la reprise d'un événement de la parole dans lequel le locuteur et l'allocutaire sont en rapport direct.

C'est ce type de constructions qui a attiré mon attention sur la question du discours rapporté en arabe. Dans la partie qui suit, j'exposerai les caractéristiques de cette forme mixte dans des textes en moyen arabe, je passerai ensuite à des observations sur cette figure en arabe contemporain, pour finir sur une tentative d'explication et des réflexions comparatives.

## *4. Cas de formes hybride recueillis en Moyen Arabe*

Les textes arabes dans lesquels j'ai d'abord relevé ces énoncés de discours hybride relèvent de la variété linguistique connue par le terme de Moyen arabe. Le Moyen arabe étant une tradition d'écriture

[8] *Histoire de la langue française*, op. Cit, p.318.
[9] B. Cerquiligni, *La parole médiévale*, p.98, Paris, 1981.

dans laquelle se mêlent des traits de la langue classique (ou standard), à des traits dialectaux, à de l’arabe standard qui manifeste des écarts par rapport à la norme de ce dernier. On hésite encore à savoir si cette tradition d’écrits résulte d’une maîtrise insuffisante de la norme classique, ou si elle serait plutôt le produit d’un choix linguistique de la part de l’écrivant, comme serait le choix d’employer la langue médiane à l’oral dans l’arabe actuel[10].

On trouvera dans chacun des exemples qui suivent un cas de la forme hybride. Les trois premiers exemples sont extraits d’une chronique de l’époque ottomane du commencement du 17e siècle et qui relate les événements qui se sont produits au Caire entre les différentes factions qui dominaient la vie politique[11].

إتفق الراي ا م لكوا غرضـهم الا بطلـوع رجـب كتخـدا وسـليم
أفندي من الاوجاق نعمل للباشا مصـلحة ضـرهم بـ يديـه، لـع
عليهم قفطان السنجقية ا يعملوا سـناجق أقـل أيـام، نصـور علـيهم
دعوة نعمل على قتلهم (ص٥).

« Ils se mirent d’accord qu’ils n’atteindraient leur but qu’en obtenant la sortie de Rajab Katkhoda et de Sélim Afandi de l’odjaq Nous faisons une faveur au Pacha, il les appelle auprès

[10] De nombreuses études et analyses ont été menées sur l’arabe médian, ou ce que l’on nomme la *logha wusta*, employée très particulièrement par le groupe des intellectuels ou des technocrates. Dans ce cas, il semble clair que cette variété relève d’un choix de la part des utilisateurs qui se sont accoutumés à mêler des traits du dialectal à des traits du standard, ce qui a eu pour résultat un système cohérent sans être systématique.

[11] M. Doss, *L’arabe en Egypte. Etude évolutive d’une langue de relation,* These de Doctorat d’Etat, 1991, non publiée. Les numéros de page suivant chacun des exemples font référence au texte établi et qui constitue le tome 2 de la thèse.

> de lui, les investit du qaftan de la Sanjaqiyya, ils sont nommés sanjaqs en peu de jours, nous tramons contre eux un complot et les faisons tuer ».

Dans d'autres cas, le passage du style direct au style indirect est plus brusque que dans celui que nous venons d'observer et les frontières entre les deux types de discours est difficile à déterminer, comme dans l'exemple qui suit :

> عرف كتخداه عند الصباح يتوجه ا مد اغا ا ذكور يبوا لنا بأي جال كانت (ص٢٧٠)

> « Il informa son katkhoda qu 'au matin il devait aller chez ledit Mohammad Agha Tu le fais venir de quelque manière que ce soit ».

> اتى م عرهم ا م يقطعوا روسهم ويضبطوا السلطان حسن، ويشدوا حيلهم والفلوس حاضرة (ص ٣٦٧)

> «Il vint et les informa de couper leur tête, de saisir El-Sultan Hassan, de prendre leur courage à deux mains et l'argent est prêt ».

L'énoncé a été annoncé comme indirect par la présence de la conjonction ا ـ م، introduit par le verbe de parole عـرفهم. Les deux verbes suivant la conjonction étant à l'inaccompli et non pas à l'impératif comme ce serait le cas s'il s'agissait du discours direct. Cependant la dernière partie de l'énoncé manifeste par sa construction prédicative le glissement vers le discours direct, puisqu'il s'agit d'un segment constitué par un sujet والفلـوس suivi d'un prédicat حاضرة.

Le quatrième exemple extrait de la chronique de Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti relate un événement qui s’est produit en 1798. Les gens du peuple constatent avec surprise les navires de la flotte anglaise pénétrant dans le port d’Alexandrie, ils s’adressent aux envahisseurs :

فكلموهم و استخ وهم عن غرضهم ، فأخ وا أ م انكليز حضروا للتفتيش علي الفرنسي لأ م خرجوا بعمارة عظيمة يريدون جهة من ا هات ، و لا ندري أين قصدهم فر ا د وكم فلا تقدرون علي دفعهم لا تتمكنون من منعهم فلم يقبل السيد مد مكرم منهم هذا القول ،

« Ils s ’adressèrent à eux et les interrogèrent sur leurs objectifs, ils répondirent en disant qu’ils étaient Anglais, venus à la recherche des Français car ceux-ci avaient pris le large dans une grande flotte visant une certaine direction Et nous ne savons pas vers où ils se dirigent, ils pourraient s ’attaquer à vous et vous ne saurez pas leur faire obstacle et les arrêter, mais Omar Makram n ’accepta pas ces propos ».

Nul doute que des exemples doivent exister de différentes périodes de l’histoire du Moyen arabe, mon relevé s’arrête pourtant là, et les exemples qui suivent sont pris d’écrits contemporains.

### *5. Cas de formes hybride recueillis en arabe moderne*

C’est dans la presse contemporaine d’Egypte que les cas de forme hybride sont très nombreux, comme on peut le constater par les exemples qui suivent :

رغم التوجهات الا ابية لـوزارة التربيـة و التعلـيم تطـوير و ـديث ا ناهج... إلا إ ا مازالت تعا معوقـات كـث ة نتيجـة عوامـل ا هـا ا ختصون... و من ا ها اهـدار اراء و ـارب ـو ٨٥٠ ألـف معلـم دون الاسـتفادة ـا و هـم اصـحاب التجربـة و ا ـ ـ ة (الأهرام , ٧ ديسم ١٩٩٨).

« En dépit des directives données par le Ministère de l’Education en vue de développer et de moderniser les programmes … ces programmes continuent à pâtir de multiples obstacles conséquences de différents facteurs dont le principal reste les spécialistes… et dont le principal est le fait que l’on néglige les opinions et l ’expérience de près de 850 mille professeurs, qu’on ne met pas à profit et qui sont pourtant ceux qui ont l’expérience. » (Al-Ahram, le 7 décembre 1998).

فاطمة هلال مود ا درسـة بـالتعليم الثـانوي تؤكـد ذلـك قائلـة ان ا ناهج استمرت متوقفة أو مدة لسن طويلـة و فجـأة أصـا م هـوس التغي ا تواصل للمناهج كما أنه هدف و لـيس تطـوير حـ ا ـم لا رصون علي تطوير ا دارس ، و أنـا شخصـيا لا اسـتفيد مـن دورات ا علم ، كما أن هناك فجوة بـ ا علـم و مـدير ا درسـة و ا وجـه فا درس تاج رعاية و هؤلاء يـؤدون عمـلا روتينيـا و يعاملوننـا مـن اعلي. فا شكلة هنا العقول ا امدة الـ عـل ا ـدرس مثـل قطعـة الشطرنج فليس هناك توجيه حقيقي حـ ا ـم مـؤخرا اسـندوا للمـدرس وظيفة بواب للمدرسة .

« Fatma Hilal Mahmoud, professeur dans le cycle d’enseignement secondaire confirme cela en disant que les programmes sont restés inchangés ou gelés pendant de longues années et, soudain ils ont été atteints par la folie du changement continu, et aussi il s’agit d’un but et

> non pas de développement, de même qu'ils ne tentent pas de développer les écoles, Et moi personnellement, je ne tire pas profit des cycles de formation des professeurs, de même qu'il existe un écart entre le professeur, le proviseur de l'école et le directeur des études. Le professeur a besoin d'égards et eux font un travail routinier et nous traitent de haut. Le problème ici est celui des esprits arrêtés qui transforment le professeur en un pion dans un jeu d'échecs, il n'existe pas de vraies directives au point que récemment ils ont attribué au professeur le rôle de portier ».

Dans ce récit, le style dévie insensiblement du discours indirect au discours direct. Le discours indirect est marqué par تؤكد ذلك قائلـة ان avec le verbe introductif suivi par la conjonction. Le passage au dicours direct se reconnaît à l'emploi du pronom suffixe de أصا م dont la référence est ambigue .On notera à ce propos que l'emploi des pronoms sans référence anaphorique appartient généralement au discours oral puisque c'est dans la situation d'oralité que le contexte est suffisamment prégnant pour substituer aux informations explicites avancées dans le cas de la communication écrite. En d'autres termes, la locutrice, Fatma Hilal s'adresse à des lecteurs/auditeurs susceptibles d'identifier ceux qu'elle accuse d'avoir «été atteints par la folie du changement continu ». Son discours est celui d'un monde familier, subjectif, empathique pour reprendre le terme employé par W. J. Ong dans sa liste des caractéristiques de la pensée et de l'expression fondées sur l'oralité[12]. Elle s'adresse de cette manière au journaliste qui à son tour ne ressent pas la nécessité de rendre le message

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[12] W.O.Ong, *Orality and literacy. The technologizing of the world*, , p. 45-46, 1988, London and New York.

explicite auprès de ses lecteurs. Mais si les propos de Fatma Hilal étaient exprimés oralement, c'est par le procédé de l'écriture que le journaliste les as transmis et malgré cela les signes de l'oralité ont été maintenus.

Le passage du discours indirect au discours direct peut également être observé à travers l'emploi de mots et d'expressions trahissant la «voix » du locuteur original des propos rapportés. Ce sont les expressions qui transmettent les jugements de ce locuteur et ses opinions, comme هوس التغيـ, يؤدون عملا روتينيا. On notera également que le journaliste a reproduit les métaphores de la locutrice originale اسندوا للمدرس وظيفة بواب للمدرسة et lـدرس مثل قطعة الشطرنج. Finalement, on notera l'interruption du discours indirect et l'emploi du pronom de la première personne dans : «Et moi personnellement, je ne tire pas profit des cycles de formation des professeurs », «et nous traitent de haut ».

> أما ا شكلة الأخرى فهـي تلاعـب الـبعض مـن معـدومي الضـمـ لا
> ـرصون على تسليم الكتب قبل الدراسة ور ا بعـد بدايتـها بفتـرة حـ
> يضطر الطلاب لشراء "الكتب ا ارجية" , والباقي مفهوم !!
>
> « Quant à l'autre problème, il concerne la malhonnêteté de certaines personnes démunies de conscience et qui ne se préoccupent pas de la distribution des manuels avant la rentrée et quelquefois même un bon moment après la rentrée, afin que les élèves soient obligés d 'acheter les «livres externes » … et le reste est bien connu !! »

Ce qui frappe dans ce texte est le va-et vient continu entre les deux styles. Ce phénomène linguistique suscite un certain nombre de questions.

On pourrait d’abord se poser la question de savoir qui est l’auteur des paroles que rapporte le dernier paragraphe cité et qui commence par , أما الشـكلة est-ce le maître d’école, Fatma Hilal ou le journaliste chargé de recueillir puis de transmettre ses propos aux lecteurs du quotidien ? Où peut-on tracer la ligne qui sépare les deux discours ?

La question suivante serait celle de savoir quel est l’effet de ce passage brusque qui fond les deux discours ? Quel est l’effet produit par ce discours où la coupure entre le direct et l’indirect n’est pas marquée ?

Les propos de la maîtresse d’école sont pris en charge par le journaliste qui a adopté ainsi son point de vue comme on a pu le voir à travers l’analyse du passage cité plus haut. Bien qu’usant de l’écriture le journaliste a conservé tous les indices de la «participation » et de l’identification avec la locutrice originale. Il transmet ce point de vue au lecteur qui à son tour se trouve en relation empathique avec la locutrice originale, la maîtresse d’école. Mais si la communication orale, ou écrite à base d’oralité, se fonde sur la participation et l’identification, elle peut également se fonder sur une vue antagoniste et hostile puisque à la base des deux se trouve une vue du monde subjective. Dans le cas décrit ici, le journaliste partageait les opinions de la personne interrogée et a mis les moyens linguistiques (oraux) au service de cette vision. Mais il peut en être autrement si le journaliste ne partage pas les opinions de la personne dont il est censé rapporter les propos, et dans ce cas il pourrait user d’autres moyens linguistiques, cette fois, pour manifester son hostilité ou au moins son détachement, comme je tenterai de le montrer à la fin de cet article.

### *6. Type de textes où la forme hybride se manifeste*

J’ai pu relever ce phénomène plus particulièrement dans les types de textes suivants :

a) Dans les reportages de presse portant sur diverses questions sociales comme l’hygiène, la santé, l’environnement, ainsi que l’éducation comme dans le texte que nous avons analysé plus haut.

b) Ce phénomène est particulièrement fréquent dans les rubriques connues sous le titre de حـوادث faits divers de nature sociale (causes juridiques célèbres, accidents divers, crimes, attentats etc). Le passage qui suit est typique des textes qui paraissent sous cette rubrique, il relate un accident qui s’est produit le deuxième jour du *Eid* lorsqu’une jeune enfant est tombée du septième étage d’un immeuble, saine et sauve.

> قال والد الطفلة فوزى كمال حامد (٤٠سـنة) بأنـه غـ مصـدق مـا
> حدث لابنته و يتضرع إ ا بالشكر على إنقاذ حيـاة الطفلـة ، و قـال
> أنه يقطن العمارة رقم ٤ (أ) ساكن صـقر قـريش با عـادي و أمـس
> الأول الثلاثاء كانت هناء تلعب مع شـقيقها خالـد (...) و فجـأة دخـل
> خالد إ داخل الشقة فرده عنا ا ان ينـادون علينـا بـأن البنـت
> سقطت من البلكونة فهرعت أنا ووالـد ا و ا ـ ان و نصـدق أعيننـا
> و ن نشاهد هناء رى متعلقـة بأحضـان أمهـا (...) فجميـع النـاس
> أخذوا مواساتنا و مساعدتنا قبول الأمر الواقع بوفـاة الطفلـة معتمـدين
> علي الارتفاع الكب الذي سقطت منـه ، و أضـاف بأنـه صـدق ا ثـل
> القائل "اعط عمرا و ارمي البحـر" حيـث أن القـدر لعـب لعبتـه و
> تدخل إنقاذ حياة ابن (الأهرام ٢١ يناير ١٩٩٩)

> « Le père de la petite fille, Fawzi Kamal Hamed (40ans) a dit qu'il ne pouvait pas croire ce qui était arrivé à sa fille et qu'il rendait grâces à Dieu qui l'avait sauvée. Il a dit qu'il habitait l'immeuble numéro 4 (A) des HLM « Saqr Quraysh» à Meadi et qu'avant hier mardi, Hanaa jouait avec son frère Khaled (…) et soudain, il est entré dans l'appartement seul et Nous avons entendu les voisins qui nous criaient que notre fille était tombée du balcon, alors je me suis précipité, moi, sa mère et les voisins et nous n'avons pas cru nos yeux voyant Hanaa courant pour se jeter dans les bras de sa mère (…) tous les gens se sont mis à nous consoler voulant nous aider à accepter le fait accompli de la mort de notre fille, convaincus qu'étant tombée de si haut, elle avait dû se tuer ; et il ajouta que le proverbe selon lequel « Donne-moi la vie quitte à me jeter à la mer » disait vrai ». (Al-Ahram, le 31 janvier, 1999)

Comme on a pu l'observer, dans ce passage les propos rapportés varient sans cesse d'un style à l'autre. Ici encore, on peut noter la participation du journaliste dans les propos de la personne à qui l'accident est advenu. Le point de vue adopté est bien celui du locuteur original comme on peut le constater le passage brutal à la première personne au milieu du récit : « il est entré dans l'appartement seul et Nous avons entendu les voisins qui nous criaient que notre fille était tombée du balcon, alors je me suis précipité ».

On notera finalement que dans la forme verbale impérative وارمي «jette-moi », c'est la variété dialectale qui apparaît comme l'indique la voyelle longue /i/, plutôt que la forme normée وارم.

L’écrit des rubriques de faits divers se rattache en partie à l’oral puisque les conditions de production de ces rubriques se rapprochent de celles de l’oral et qu’elles se fondent souvent sur les propos des personnes à qui les événements arrivent. Il est donc assez normal que ces écrits évoquent les transcriptions d’oral spontané. Au contraire, le domaine de l’information internationale n’est pas celui où l’on s’attend à retrouver des résidus d’oral dans l’écrit puisque cette fois nous sommes dans une aire où la «distance » est de rigueur, elle est imposée par le sujet traité qui implique un certain degré de formalité.

c) Assez étrangement, la forme hybride apparaît également dans les rubriques rapportant les informations internationales, comme dans l’extrait suivant :

أكد السيد عمرو موسي وزير ا ارجية أن النبأ الكاذب الذي أذاعه التلفزيون الإسرائيلي أمس و نسبه إ مصادر مصرية حول مرض الرئيس السوري حافظ الأسد و نقله إ ا ستشفي هو جزء من لة تضليل كنا نرجو ألا دث .

« Monsieur Amr Moussa, Ministre des Affaires étrangères a déclaré que la nouvelle mensongère diffusée par la télévision israélienne hier et qui a été attribuée à des sources égyptiennes au sujet de la maladie du président syrien Hafez El-Assad, et de son hospitalisation faisait partie d’une campagne de tromperie que nous aurions préféré éviter ».

Une lecture possible serait de considérer tout l’énoncé rapporté comme un cas de discours rapporté au style direct. Dans ce cas,

l'énoncé rapporté commencerait à النبـــأ الكـــاذب «la nouvelle mensongère » bien qu'alors la conjonction introductive aurait dû être /inna/ et non pas /anna/. Il me semble plutôt que l'énoncé rapporté a été commencé au discours indirect pour être interrompu comme dans les cas déjà observés par une intrusion brusque de la «voix du locuteur ».

d) J'ai également repéré la forme hybride dans une nouvelle se rapportant aux affaires religieuses, dans l'extrait suivant où sont rapportés les propos de Cheikh Al-Azhar à propos du mariage coutumier:

> وحول الزواج العر قال ان فيه يع الاركان و لكـن ينقصـه التوثيـق و
> انا شخصـيا لا اشـهده و لا احبـه و لا اجلـس لسـه لأنـه (...)
> الف للنظام الذي وضعته الدولة...

« Et concernant le mariage coutumier, il a dit que celui-ci comportait toutes les conditions légales mais qu'il péchait par l'absence d'authentification Et moi personnellement, je n'y tiens pas le rôle de témoin, et je ne l'apprécie pas et je n'y assiste pas, car il contredit l'ordre établi par l'Etat ».

e) On notera enfin, cette forme particulière du discours rapporté dans le texte littéraire :

> وردت حبيبة بأن أقربائها ومعارفها صلون علـى فائـدة شـهرية تصـل
> إ الربع بينما أصل نقودك كامل س، ا ث لنـا عـن واسـطة لتقبلنـا
> الشركة، فقد عت أ ا توقفت عن استقبال ودائع العملاء...[13]

[13] مود الوردا الروض العاطر، ص ٣٣، ٣٤ رويات ا لال، يوليو ١٩٩٨.

> «Habiba répond que ses parents et ses connaissances obtenaient un intérêt mensuel qui pouvaient atteindre le quart Alors que ton capital reste intact, trouve-nous un intermédiaire pour que la compagnie nous accepte. J'ai appris que la compagnie acceptait de nouveaux dépôts des agents ».

Comme on peut le constater, la forme hybride apparaît dans de nombreux contextes et qui ne sont pas tous de la même nature. Si dans certains contextes elle semble relever de l'oralité, ce qui justifierait alors son apparition ; d'autres contextes se prêteraient au contraire à un usage plus formel ? En d'autres termes, la forme hybride apparaît dans des usage assez étendus, ce qui mérite la recherche d'une explication.

## *7. Essai d'interprétation*

a) L'absence de séparation de formes différentes de discours rapporté a pu être observée dans plusieurs langues, à des époques diverses, comme nous avons pu le noter à travers les exemples pris à la littérature médiévale française. O. Jespersen relève ce phénomène dans la langue grecque, chez Xénophon, ainsi que dans les Sagas d'Iceland où ce phénomène serait fréquent. Pour l'expliquer Jespersen avance l'explication de la faille de mémoire qui seraient à l'origine de «l'incapacité de maintenir pour une longue durée le changement d'attitude exigée par le discours indirect »[14]. Cette explication rejoindrait l'observation citée plus haut par

[14] Otto Jespersen, op. Cit. p. 299.

Picoche et Marchello-Nizia selon laquelle le passage du discours indirect au discours direct apparaît particulièrement dans les passages où les énoncés de discours indirect sont longs.

b) Bien que la faille de mémoire et l’inattention puissent être retenues comme causes de ce phénomène, ce ne saurait en être les seules. On peut engager l’explication sur un plan énonciatif, c’est d’ailleurs la démarche engagée par B. Cerquiligni qui voit dans le passage du discours indirect au discours direct une tendance à la ré-énonciation dans un système de repères où le locuteur et l’allocutaire sont remis en scène par l’intermédiaire de leur voix propre plutôt que par celle du narrateur. Le discours rapporté par le narrateur ravit pour un moment les voix vives du locuteur et de l’allocutaire, ces voix et leurs discours sont représentés sur le plan réducteur de la troisième personne le «pronom de l’absent » ou ضم الغائـب. La forme hybride représente précisément la reprise du discours par son ou ses énonciateur(s) original ou originaux. Un chapitre de la rhétorique arabe est d’ailleurs consacré au phénomène linguistique des changement ou des passages à différentes personnes dans un même discours, il s’agit des différents procédés stylistiques du التفات ou « appel d‘attention ». Les passages se font entre les trois personnes du locuteur, de l’allocutaire et de la personne absente (il/elle), dans le but de retenir ou de raviver l’attention du récepteur du message[15]. Il reste cependant à interpréter ce procédé

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[15] الزركشي ال هان علوم القرآن ص ٣١٤-٣٣٧الالتفات: "وهو نقل الكلام من أسلوب إ أسلوب آخر تطرية واستدراراً للسامع، و ديدا لنشاطه، وصيانة اطره من ا لال والضجر، بدوام الأسلوب الواحد على عه" ص٣١٤
“c’est le changement dans la parole d‘un style à l‘autre dans l‘intérêt du

stylistique sur un plan d'intentionnalité, en effet les changements d'une personne à une autre dans le discours sont- ils le fait d'une recherche de style intentionnelle ? Et la forme hybride peut-elle être ressentie comme l'effet d'une recherche de style intentionnelle ? Il ne s'agit pas à mon avis d'un choix stylistique mais plutôt d'un phénomène provoqué par divers facteurs comme l'inattention, le facteur de l'oralité et d'autres facteurs que je développe dans les paragraphes qui suivent.

c) On pourrait également évoquer l'absence de codification comme facteur permettant d'expliquer non seulement la forme hybride étudiée ici, mais bien d'autres aspects de la langue arabe contemporaine et écrite. Nous pourrions prendre comme point de réflexion la ponctuation qui est un des marqueurs du discours rapporté, puisqu'elle permet de signaliser le discours direct. L'absence de ponctuation ou du moins son utilisation sporadique en arabe, comme il a été dit plus haut (voir 2., ainsi que la note 4) rejoint donc la situation de l'ancien français où il n'existe que très rarement des signes pour indiquer le discours, la ponctuation des manuscrits médiévaux étant surtout rythmique[16]. En ancien français, cette marque n'était pas encore généralisée, son usage restant sporadique, alors qu'en arabe, la ponctuation a été codifiée, et les règles de la ponctuation ont mieux suivies à d'autres périodes (comme j'ai

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récepteur, pour raviver son énergie et pour éviter l'ennui provoqué par un style unique."

[16] *La parole médiévale* p. 12.

pu le constater par l’observation de journaux du périodique Al-Ahram de l’année 1950). Donc nous sommes devant un phénomène de disparition d’un groupe de signes de la ponctuation, ou du moins devant une régression d’emploi de ce groupe de signes, sans doute causé par le retour à une écriture plus marquée par le rythme et l’oralité[17].

d) Un autre facteur pourrait bien être la diglossie. En effet, comme nous l’avons mentionné au début de cet article, les énoncés rapportés sont rarement retransmis dans une forme identique à celle qui a été produite par le locuteur original. Comme nous l’avons déjà écrit plus haut, l’énoncé produit à l’oral dans une variété du dialectal est généralement modifié et transmis à l’écrit dans une forme d’arabe standard. L’écart établi entre ce qui a été produit par le locuteur original et sa reproduction rapportée pourrait dès lors être à l’origine d’une reconnaissance sinon explicite du moins implicite de la non-identité entre le produit et le reproduit, au niveau du signifiant ou du signifié, du registre employé ou du contenu du message. Si nous restons au niveau du registre employé, il est évident à travers les exemples observés que les propos du locuteur original ont subi une transformation au niveau de la morpho-syntaxe comme dans عنا ا ان ينادون « nous avons entendu les voisins » où nous trouvons la terminaison du verbe de l’arabe standard, ou encore dans l’emploi du pronom ن « nous ». Ailleurs la modification s’observe au niveau du lexique : فهرعت “et je suis accouru”. La question qui pourrait

[17] A cela certains répondront qu’en ce qui concerne l’arabe la ponctuation est un système de signes redondants et même superflus puisque la langue possède un système de connecteurs qui dispensent de l’utilisation de ces signes. A quoi il me semble nécessaire de répondre que ces signes ont été

se poser dès lors est la suivante : ne se peut-il pas que l'écart reconnu entre le produit et le reproduit se fasse aussi au niveau du contenu du message ?

e) Et ceci nous ramène à nouveau à la question de la finalité du discours rapporté. Il ne faudrait pas oublier que le trait linguistique discuté ici concerne la manière de rapporter le discours d'autrui. La question qui se pose dès lors est la suivante : est-il suffisant pour décrire et comprendre les formes de discours rapporté de se limiter à des questions de grammaire et de linguistique ? Je ne le pense pas, et il me semblerait au contraire nécessaire, dans ce domaine de la communication, de tenir compte de la culture ainsi que des relations de pouvoir qui régissent la société où cette langue est employée. Pourquoi les règles du discours rapporté en arabe sont-elles hésitantes et floues en ce qui concerne le choix du registre et l'absence de ponctuation[18]? Est-ce seulement à cause de l'absence de codification commune à la situation linguistique dans son ensemble ? ou bien est-ce que les causes sont à chercher dans le peu de cas que l'on fait de la justesse et de la précision de la voix de l'Autre ? La voix de l'Autre est-elle mal transmise à cause de l'absence de lois qui régissent cette partie de la langue ? Ou est-ce que ces lois sont négligées parce qu'au départ la transmission de la voix de l'Autre est traitée avec légèreté ? Rapportant les propos d'autrui on peut le faire selon une variété de manières. Ces propos peuvent être rapportés de façon solennelle ou

[18] On lit dans le superbe *Traité de la ponctuation française* de Jacques Drillon : « Si l'une des tâches de la ponctuation est de lever les équivoques, la suppression de tout signe vise à les rétablir », page 55-56, 1991, Paris.

désinvolte. Des propos officiels ou jugés importants peuvent être retransmis avec le plus grand souci de précision; mais à mesure que l’on s’éloigne de ce pôle et que l’on se rapproche de propos de personnes jugées moins importantes, ces propos peuvent être rapportés avec liberté, voir avec désinvolture ou même avec hostilité. Et comme les propos d’autrui peuvent être rapportés avec un souci de précision, ils peuvent apparaître déformés, avec une possibilité ou un désir de distorsion. Je prendrai comme illustration de ce type de retransmission douteuse, un cas qui s’est produit dans le contexte d’une vive polémique suscitée par un ouvrage de Maxime Rodinson sur la vie du prophète Mohammad. Ce livre avait fait partie d’une liste d’ouvrages dont la lecture critique était recommandée dans le cadre d’un cours sur l’histoire de la civilisation islamique à l’Université Américaine du Caire. La polémique est née à partir d’un événement déclenché par des étudiants de cette université qui contestaient la proposition de lecture de cet ouvrage. Sans vouloir entrer dans plus de détails concernant cette polémique et le débat animé qui s’est étalé sur les pages de nombreux quotidiens et périodiques, il nous suffira de reproduire l’extrait d’un article publié dans le quotidien Al-Ahram se proposant de rapporter les propos du président de l’Université Américaine au Caire:

و من ناحية أعلن السيد "فاندو " رئـيس ا امعـة الأمريكيـة أن ا امعـة لا تسمح بتدريس لآي فكر فيه مسـاس باالـدين الإسـلامي. و قـال - لقاء مع وزير التعليم العا - إن ا امعـة تأسـف للخطـأ الفـردي غـ ا قصود ، فيما يتصل بتدريس كتاب رودنسون. و أحـاط فانـدو وزيـر التعليم العا بالتنفيذ الفوري لقراره ا ـاص نـع تـدريس الكتـاب ، و

> سحبه من الطلاب ، ا احتواه مـن أكاذيـب و افتـراءات علـى الـدين الإسلامي . (الأهرام ١٦ مايو ١٩٩٨)

> « Monsieur le Président de l'Université Américaine a déclaré que l'Université n'admettait pas l'enseignement de toute pensée qui portât atteint à la religion islamique. Il a déclaré, dans une rencontre avec le Ministre de l'éducation supérieure que l'Université présentait ses excuses pour l'erreur individuelle et involontaire concernant l'enseignement du livre de Rodinson. Le président a informé le Ministre de l'Education supérieure qu'il ferait immédiatement exécuter le décret concernant l'interdiction d'enseigner le livre et son retrait de la circulation à cause de ce qu 'il contient de mensonges et de calomnies contre la religion islamique ». (Al-Ahram, le 16 mai, 1998)

A la lecture de cet extrait et particulièrement à celle des dernières lignes qui le composent, on est en droit de s'interroger sur l'identité de l'auteur des paroles retransmises dans le quotidien. Qui donc est l'auteur de ces propos est-ce en effet le président de l'Université ou l'auteur de l'article du quotidien pris comme tant d'autres dans la vivacité de la campagne contre l'ouvrage de Rodinson ? Les frontières floues et incertaines du discours rapporté permettent cette hésitation. Il suffit qu'une personne ou un groupe détienne le pouvoir de la parole pour qu'il puisse modeler à sa guise la parole de l'autre.

L'observation de cette forme hybride entre deux langues et à travers des périodes de temps très étendues (17e siècle et période contemporaine pour l'arabe d'Egypte ; 12e siècle pour le français) a permis de soulever nombre des questions.

Nous pouvons conclure sur la constatation qu'une forme ou une construction linguistique peut avoir pour origine plusieurs facteurs. Elle peut être le résultat d'une faille de mémoire ou d'une absence de codification, elle peut représenter un trait d'oralité ; certains peuvent y voir le résultat d'une recherche stylistique, elle peut enfin être ou devenir un outil pour détourner la parole de l'autre.

Preuve s'il en fallait de l'arbitraire du signe qui ne porte pas sa valeur et sa fonction en lui-même ou de façon intrinsèque, mais comme résultat de processus historiques et sociaux.

# YUSUF AL-SHIRBINI’S *Hazz al-Quhuf bi-Sharh Qasid Abi Shaduf* : ISSUES RELEVANT TO ITS ASSESSMENT AS A SOURCE FOR 17TH-CENTURY EGYPTIAN COLLOQUIAL[1]

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تعا   هذه ا قالة كتاب "هز القحوف بشرح قصـيد أ   شـادوف" الـذي ألفـه الكاتب ا صري يوسف الشربي    أواخـر القـرن العاشـر ا جـري (السـادس عشر ا يلادي)، والذي   توي على مادة كب ة ا  جـم غنيـة ا ضـمون للعاميـة ا صرية قد تكون أهم مصدر وصلنا  ا قبل القرن العشرين لدراسـة هـذه اللغـة. وتن  ا قالة بعض ا شاكل والقضايا ا  اصة بطبيعة ا ؤلف كـنص لـه أكثـر مـن شكل وفق ا خطوطات ا ختلفة وبطبيعة ا ؤلف كـابن عصـره لـه موقفـه مـن موضوعه وهو الفلاح فهذا كله قد يؤثر على تقييمنا للكتـاب كمصـدر لدراسـة تاريخ العامية ا صرية ومدى مصداقيته   هذا الغرض.

“The Shaking of the Peasant Caps over the Interpretation of the Odes of Abu Shaduf” (هز القحوف بشرح قصيد أ   شادوف) was written by

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[1] This is an abridged and revised version of a talk presented at the CAIRO LINGUISTS’ GROUP on 11 Dec. 1998. The author is preparing a critical edition and English translation of the work in question.

the Egyptian Yusuf ibn Muhammad ibn ʻAbd al-Jawwad Al-Shirbini in all probability at some point between 1074/1663-4 and 1097/1685-6. Unique in pre-twentieth century Arabic literature in its choice of rural life as its central theme, the work has attracted the intermittent attention of scholars since the mid-19th century, the most useful description and assessment to date being Gabriel Baer's article "Shirbini's Hazz al-Quhuf and its Significance",[2] to which the reader is referred for further details on the author.

In this paper I will focus on the reliability of the work as a source for the reconstruction of elements of the Egyptian Arabic of three hundred years ago, and on some of the issues it raises, both as the outcome of a particular textual history, and as the product of a particular individual, living at a particular time and harboring specific intentions and attitudes.

In bare outline the work consists of a long introduction (making up almost half of the book) describing rural life and customs, followed by a 47-line ode, presumably written by Shirbini himself but attributed by him to a peasant called Abu Shaduf, plus Shirbini's extensive commentary. This thumbnail sketch does little justice, however, to a text that in over 500,000 words ranges over not only the panorama of peasant life in the author's time (touching on such subjects as peasant names, peasant weddings, adventures that befall peasants when they go to the city, peasant verse, peasant food, peasant religion and much else) but also digresses into such tangentially related topics such as

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[2] In BAER, G. Fellah and Townsman in the Middle East: Studies in Social History . London 1982, an expanded version of an earlier article "*Fellah and Townsman in Ottoman Egypt – A Study of Shirbini's* Hazz al-Quhuf," in: Asian and African Studies [Jerusalem] 8, 1972.

farting, the nature of love, gerontophilia, urination, pederasty, fate, beards and the death of al-Husayn ibn ‹Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Even this expanded account of the book's contents overlooks a further important facet of this many-sided work, namely the critique of contemporary scholarly discourse that is implicit in Shirbini's use of one of the most characteristic forms of intellectual production of the period, the text-and-commentary. This choice permits him to apply the full range of tools employed in this genre (including lexical, grammatical and literary analysis that mimics, and sometimes explicitly refers to, such illustrious commentators as al-Zamakhshari and al-Baydawi, Safi al-Din al-Hilli, and al-Firuzabadi) to the lives, loves and literature of the peasant – material that would have appeared to his readers ludicrously unworthy of such treatment. From this perspective it is as though al-Firuzabadi had decided to devote his dictionary *al-Qamus al-Muhit* ("The Encompassing Ocean") to the language of children or idiots; and indeed Shirbini makes frequent indirect playful references to the latter and the tradition it exemplifies when, after defining a supposedly peasant word, he invokes as his authority the spurious *al-Qamus al-Azraq wal-Namus al-Ablaq* ("The Blue Ocean and Piebald Canon (or Mosquito)").[3]

This brief outline should, however, at least suffice to remove any idea that this is a work of ethnography or folk-lore *à la* Ahmad Amin, or an account of landholding and taxation *à la* Ibn Mamati, or of history *à la* Jabarti. It is, rather, an idiosyncratic manifestation of the

[3] The title may be a snide reference to a specific work, namely the unpublished summary of Firuzabadi's work entitled *al-Namus al-Ma'nus al-Mulakhkhas min al-Qamus* ("The Cosy Canon Extracted from the *Qamus*") by ‹Ali al-Qari' al-Harawi (died 1014/1605), a work "not…held in high esteem" (E.W. Lane An Arabic-English Lexicon 1863, p.xix).

*adab* tradition, displaying all the variety of techniques and all the eclecticism and breadth of culture that that implies.

Of particular interest for the student of language is the considerable amount of material written in colloquial Arabic contained in *Hazz al-Quhuf*, and the comments of the author on that material, which he characterizes in most cases as belonging to “the language of the people of the countryside” (لغة أهل الاريـاف، لغـة الريافـة, etc.). This material may be categorized in various ways and occurs in various contexts.

The richest colloquial passages are those prose narratives in which a peasant reports to his fellows on an adventure that has befallen him, usually away from his village. (For example, a peasant goes to Cairo to pay his taxes, observes his master – the tax-farmer of his village – making love to his wife, and on his return tries to apply what he has learned, with disastrous consequences.) These monologues are the longest colloquial passages in the book, reaching up to 1,200 words apiece, and may be the longest passages of pre-19th century Egyptian colloquial in existence.

Also of high linguistic interest are the anecdotes related by the author in which dialogues occur, typically between a peasant and a townsman, though here the speech of the townee is sometimes significantly more formal than that of the peasant.

A third category of colloquial material is the poetry—usually identified as either *mawaaliya* ( مواليا) or *qaSiid* (قصيد)—attributed to peasant authors. Shirbini subjects a number of these, in addition to the main *qaSiid* of Abu Shaduf, to detailed commentary and analysis.

Finally, there is a short letter in colloquial,[4] plus lists of uncontextualized items consisting of words or isolated phrases, and extensive inventories of peasant names, *kunya*s ( ك "sobriquets") and *alqaab* (ألقـاب "nicknames"). Taken altogether, the contextualized colloquial material in *Hazz al-Quhuf*, defined as passages consisting of one or more complete sentence, amounts to some 6,750 words.

The significance of the presence of so much material in the colloquial Egyptian of three hundred years ago is enormous, since we have only a limited understanding of the history and development of the Arabic dialects. Among the reasons for this are the low cultural status accorded the colloquial language by society at large throughout history, which has led to a neglect of and even sometimes strong bias against study of the dialects. Even the major exception to the neglect of spoken Arabic before the 19th century, namely the glossaries of the "linguistic mistakes of the common people (*laHn al-ʿaamma*)" provides only limited and highly selective insights into earlier stages of the colloquial dialects, since "the focus of concern of the *laHn* authors was not the nature of the dialects of their time and place but the elimination of any fault whether verbal or graphic from formal Arabic."[5] Other, less tendentious texts are few though extremely important: The "middle Arabic" medieval Christian and Jewish texts

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[4] Bulaq 1274 p.42 *fa-qad arsala baʿD fuqahaa' al-riif maktuuban* ("A country *faqiih* sent a letter…")…. This follows the much longer *Maktub Funayn* ("Funayn's Letter"), which, however, is a direct quotation from the *diiwaan* of ʿAli ibn Sudun al-Bashbughawi, and dates from the 14-th century (see fn13 below).

[5] MOLAN, Peter D. Medieval Western Arabic: Reconstructing Elements of the Dialects of al-Andalus, Sicily and North Africa from the Lahn al-'Amma Literature. Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1978.

studied by Blau[6] show numerous colloquial traits; 17th century Egyptian rabbinical courts under certain circumstances took verbatim statements in Arabic from witnesses (Blanc[7] has studied this very interesting material); shadow plays such as those of the 13th century Ibn Daniyal[8] and the 18th century *Liʿb al-Manar* have been published and to some degree analyzed;[9] Madiha Doss has brought to our attention the colloquiality of the historical chronicles of the Ottoman period.[10] The list could be extended—but not very far. And much of the material is very brief, or belongs to a genre characterized by a high admixture of non-colloquial or special features (e.g., those associated with particular art forms such as shadow plays or popular poetry). Needless to say, the available sample of rural language is even smaller – so small in fact as to be practically invisible.[11] It is only in the late

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[6] BLAU, Joshua A grammar of Christian Arabic based mainly on South-Palestine texts from the first millenium. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalia, Vols. 267, 276, 279, Subsidia, Vols. 27-29, Louvain, Sécretariat du Corpus SCO, 1966; and *The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1962.

[7] BLANC, Haim: *Egyptian Arabic in the Seventeenth Century: Notes on the Judaeo-Arabic Passages of Darxe No'am (Venice 1697)*. Unpublished paper, 1978.

[8] Three Shadows Plays by Muhammad Ibn Daniyal edited by the late Paul Kahle. Cambridge, 1992; Hamada, Ibrahim Khayal al-Zill, wa-Tamthiliyyat Ibn Daniyal. Cairo, 1963.

[9] KAHLE, Paul, with Georg JACOB: Das Orientalische Schattenspiel, *Vol. 1: Der Leuchturm von Alexandria, ein arabisches Schattenspiel aus dem mittelalterlichen Ägypten*. Stuttgart, 1930.

[10] DOSS, Madiha: *Military Chronicles of 17th Century Egypt as an Aspect of Popular Culture*. Proceedings of the Colloquium on Logos, Ethos, Mythos in the Middle East and North Africa, Part 1: Linguistics and Literature, ed. K. DÉVÉNYI and T. IVÁNYI. The Arabist (Budapest Studies in Arabic) 17, n.d.

[11] The fragment of a debate between a peasant and a townsman published by S. D. GOITEIN: *"Townsman and Fellah, A Geniza Text from*

19th century that the earlier thin trickle of materials in or about colloquial becomes a small but noticeable stream.[12]

Even when colloquial utterance was committed to paper, the conservative nature of the orthography used tends to conceal the detail. By force of scribal habit, consonants such as *thaa'* and *dhaal* —old interdental fricatives that we know to have been realized early on as the dental stops /*t*/ and /*d*/—continue to be represented in the orthography of colloquial passages by ث and ذ. Similarly, in the absence of explicit comment, we cannot tell from a written text whether its author pronounced *jiim* (ج) as in the Qur'an, or as today in Cairo, or as today in Upper Egypt, or in some other way; short vowels and doubled consonants (*tashdiid*) are usually not indicated, so we do not know whether people said *Hilw* (حِلْـو "sweet") as in modern Cairene or *Hulw* as in literary Arabic, or similarly *dukhkhaan* (دخـان "smoke") or *dukhaan*. Long vowels in closed syllables usually are

*the 17th Century".* Asian and African Studies [Jerusalem] 8, pp.257-261), though not without colloquial features, is less relevant here than might appear, being strongly influenced by the formalized style of the typical *mufaakhara*. The *Maktub Funayn* of Ibn Sudun mentioned above, though written as though *from* the countryside, is not *of* it: its author is careful to distinguish himself from the peasants.

12 Mikha'il Sabbagh's الرسالة التامة كلام العامة وا ناهج أحوال الكلام الدارج, ed. H. THORBECKE. Strassburg, 1886 is in fact a precursor of this late-19th century movement among non-Arab scholars, the original work having been written in 1812; thereafter we have SPITTA, Wilhelm: Grammatik des arabischen Vulgärdialektes von Ägypten Leipzig, 1880 ; SPIRO, Socrates An Arabic-English Vocabulary of the Colloquial Arabic of Egypt. Cairo, 1895; VOLLERS, Karl *Beitraege zur Kenntiss der lebenden arabische Sprache in Aegypten*. Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 41 (1887), pp.365-402. It is a significant indicator of the sparseness of written colloquial material that both Spitta and Vollers made use of *Hazz al-Quhuf* in their studies of supposedly contemporary Egyptian Arabic.

written as such, even though they may have been shortened in speech, as they are in modern Cairene. By the same token, deviation from the orthographic norms, when it occurs, can be very useful in revealing colloquial features.[13]

In light of the above, the existence of a work dating from three hundred years ago, one of whose stated aims is to record and analyze peasant speech and which contains a large corpus of material should be of enormous interest and importance, if that characterization can be taken at face value. Can it, however, so be taken? How far can we trust Shirbini as a witness? In order to assess Shirbini's reliability in this regard, we must face certain problems and raise certain issues. The fact that the texts we are working with are *written* poses a number of problems of orthography; and the issues concern Shirbini's intentions and his attitudes towards his subject and the impact of these on his representation of "the language of the countryfolk."

[13] The semi-colloquial, or poetic colloquial, writings of the 15-th century Egyptian poet and humorist ‛Ali ibn Sudun al-Bashbughawi, the autograph manuscript of whose *diwan* has been ably edited recently, provide rare contemporary examples of a deliberately colloquialized orthography, e.g., ياmو ("O Mummy!"), تسيب ("it is let loose"), and these are thoroughly discussed in the editor's study (Vrolijk, Arnoud *Bringing a laugh to a scowling face.* Leiden: Research School CNWS, Leiden University, 1998, see p. 140 – 159).

## 1. *Orthography and "endimanchement"*

I have located 11 manuscripts of *Hazz al-Quhuf*, of which four are complete,[14] and I have based my edition on an examination of these four, plus the first printed edition.

*Hazz al-Quhuf* was printed for the first time in 1274/1857, by the government press at Bulaq, as a commercial undertaking by an entrepreneur who presumably rented the government presses and paid incentives to the workers, a common arrangement at the time.[15] All subsequent printed and lithographed editions derive from this Bulaq edition and generally differ from it only in occasional misprints and editorial emendations. The exception is the most recent printed edition, brought out in 1963 by Muhammad Qandil al-Baqli, which, though still based on the Bulaq tradition, is bowdlerized and abridged.

But why use the printed version at all in the preparation of a new edition when manuscripts are available? Comparison reveals that in colloquial passages a small group of colloquial/literary isoglosses tend to occur in the manuscripts—contrary to expectation—in their literary reflexes and in the printed edition in their colloquial reflexes. Thus, where Bulaq fairly consistently uses ت and د for old ث and ذ, the manuscripts tend to have the latter; where Bulaq has دا and دي for the masculine and feminine singular demonstratives, the manuscripts often (though not always) have هذا etc.; where Bulaq has اللـي as the

[14] Cambridge University Library Or. 1420/1421; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris Or. 3267/3268; Forschungsbibliothek Gotha Or. A2345; Selly Oaks College, Birmingham, Mingana Collection Ms 1564/1565.

[15] The name of this individual is given as ،Abd al-Hamid Bayk Afandi Nafi' in the colophon (p.229). On the role of the private entrepreneur in the Bulaq press, see Radwan, Abu al-Futuh *Tarikh Matba'at Bulaq*. Cairo, Al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya, 1953, pp. 118 – 131.

relative adjective, the manuscripts sometimes have الـذي etc.; and the manuscripts have fewer examples of the split negative *maa.…sh(i)* (ما…ش/شي) and the *bi*-imperfect. So what is going on here? Did the Bulaq editors decide to make the text closer to the colloquial of their own day, perhaps to make it more recognizable and thus more saleable (this was, after all, a commercial enterprise)? And is the credibility of the Bulaq text as a witness damaged by this phenomenon?

I reject the last proposition in the belief that the Bulaq edition belongs to a manuscript tradition that better represents what the author wrote with respect to the representation of colloquial forms,[16] and that the classicisms found in the manuscripts are due to scribal habit reinforced by "endimanchement", i.e., the tendency of copyists to make their material conform to orthographic and grammatical norms. I base this contention on the following arguments: (1) the evidence of other texts, both older than and contemporary with *Hazz al-Quhuf*; (2) internal inconsistencies among different manuscripts and groups of manuscripts; (3) contradictions between certain forms in the manuscripts and Shirbini's explicit comments on them; and (4) the contradiction implicit in putting literary forms in peasants' mouths and the author's characterization of peasant language as crude and debased.

With regard to the evidence of other texts, we already know from multiple sources older than *Hazz al-Quhuf* that the shift from interdental fricatives to dental stops, for example, had taken place in sedentary Arabic dialects on a wide scale well before the 17th century, and this shift is confirmed repeatedly by examples in other

16 In other respects, of course, the manuscripts are sometimes superior; they contain, for instance, a number of passages that are missing from the Bulaq edition.

contemporary texts from Egypt, where one often finds, for example, متل for مثـل (“like”), دقـن for ذقـن (“beard”), and ضـلمة for ظلمـة (“darkness”). Again, the use in Egypt of demonstrative forms without preposed *ha-* goes back to the earliest times,[17] while sources contemporary with Shirbini confirm the use of forms such as دا, دي and دوله (the last Fischer discovers first in the 16th century).[18] There is no reason, therefore, to dismiss these forms when they occur in the Bulaq edition as 19th century innovations.

With regard to variation within and among the manuscripts, we should first note two general points. The first is that the use of literary reflexes in colloquial passages decreases the further one gets into the book, implying that scribal resistance to colloquial forms was worn down by the frequency of their occurrence. The second is that there is greater agreement on the use of colloquial forms in verse than in prose, implying that the constraints of meter and rhyme act to maintain the original colloquial forms. Variation among groups of manuscripts also provides stemmatic support for the precedence of colloquial over literary forms in such contexts. Thus while three manuscripts (Cambridge, Paris, Gotha) tend to agree in using a literary form, the fourth (Mingana) not infrequently supports Bulaq in the use of a colloquial reflex. For example, within the space of a few lines, Bulaq and Mingana provide three examples of relative pronoun اللـي (in Mingana ا) against الـذي in the other manuscripts,[19] and again in one line we find Bulaq and Mingana agreeing on ايـده (“his hand”)

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17 FISCHER, Wolfdietrich: *Die demonstrativen Bildungen der neuarabische Dialekte. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Grammatik der Arabischen.* ‘s-Gravenhage, 1959.

18 Idem p.106

19 Bulaq p.20, lines 27 to 30: قحفي اللي ألبسه...الزكبيه اللي نع فيها الفول...داك العمله اللي يعملوها.

versus يـده and حـد ("someone") versus أحـد.[20] Even more telling, perhaps, is the occasional example of incomplete change, where the scribe is caught red-handed, as it were, in the act of *endimanchement*. Thus for السنه اللي ("the year which") in Bulaq and Mingana, we find in the other three manuscripts السـنه الـذي , with a masculine relative adjective ungrammatically following a feminine noun.[21]

In support of the third argument — that Shirbini's explicit comments prove that he intended colloquial forms — we may cite an occurrence of the split negative morpheme *maa…sh(i)* which is the subject of an explicit comment by Shirbini that is rendered meaningless in the manuscripts by distortion: Shirbini quotes a piece of doggerel by a certain Shaykh Barakat, which includes the words (Bulaq) بركات جا يسلم ماقدرشـي ("Barakat came to give his greetings but could not"). In three manuscripts (Cambridge, Paris, Gotha) this appears as بركات جا يسلم ما قد ارى, in the fourth (Mingana) as بركـات جا يسـلم مـا قـد راي, which not only make no reasonable sense but contradict Shirbini's commentary on this verse, which he devotes to the difference between two negative forms, one with ما alone and one with the additional element.[22] Similarly, one might cite, from the Mingana manuscript alone, cases where عظـيم is so written, while the point of Shirbini's commentary is that peasants pronounce this word with ض, hence عضـيم; where the manuscript has يـا ليـة, while the commentary discusses the "rural" form يـــارية; and where the manuscript reads عا against a peasant poetaster's hypercorrect عا ا.

[20] Bulaq p.23, line 8.

[21] Bulaq p.24, line 18.

[22] Bulaq p.52, 9 lines from the bottom.

Finally, at a more general level of analysis, it has to be asked whether putting literary forms into the mouths of peasants is consistent with Shirbini's insistence that the language of peasants is gross and debased. Thus, in the preamble to his work, Shirbini states that the "linguistic usages of the countryfolk…resemble, most assuredly, the farting of ants", while the words that occur in their verse are "like stinking rags in shape and form" and their verse in general is characterized by "an indubitable crudeness of expression." More specifically, ما زال ("is still…, continues to…") becomes ما ضال in the mouths of country dwellers "because of the awkwardness of their tongues" (لاعوجاج ألسنتهم), while the use of the *bi*-imperfect is appropriate in a peasant verse "because it is of a piece with the boorishness of the words and their feeble style" ( لأنه مناسب لثقل الكلام وركاكته) and elsewhere there is mention of "the uncouthness of speech appropriate to such people" (عجرفة الكلام ا ناسبة ؤلاء القوم).

## 2. *Intention, Attitude and Representation*

It is not only in terms of the surface of the text, however, that the author's intentions and attitudes are relevant for an evaluation of his representation of "peasant language".

In this context, I would stress firstly that Shirbini's primary intention was not to give a systematic account of the language of the countryside, but rather to use that language to illustrate his thesis that the peasant is by nature, and irredeemably, coarse. On the other hand, it was one of his stated purposes to amuse: Shirbini states at the start of his book that he intends to include in it "some comic quips and foolish maxims by way of licentiousness and outrageousness and frivolity and brazenness" ( بعض فكاهيات هزلية وحكم هِبالية على سبيل اُجون وا لاعة والديدنة

والصـقاعة). However, the ludic nature of the work is more fundamental than this would imply, for its very *raison d'être*, the "ode" of Abu Shaduf, is itself a joke—a poem written by Shirbini himself solely to provide a vehicle for his own parody of a commentary, a concept reminiscent of Vladimir Nabokov's convolutedly self-referential comic masterpiece *Pale Fire.*[23] In the same vein, the poet's very name, Abu Shaduf, appears to indicate no more than a derogatory peasant stereotype, the *shaduuf* being a particularly primitive irrigation device. Similarly, his ancestors bear ridiculous names, such as Abu Jaruf, Laqaliq, Bahlaq and Kul Kara ("Eat-Shit"), as do the two fictitious villages—Tall Fandaruq and Shamartati—that vie for the honor of being his birthplace.

The impact of this desire to amuse is particularly obvious, with regard to language, in Shirbini's explanatory comments on the colloquial material. The words he uses to fix consonantal patterns (أوزان) and etymologies, for example, are patently absurd, and often vulgar. To give but one example, commenting on the words أتتـ صبية ("a maiden came to me"), Shirbini remarks that صبية على وزن بلية أو رزية مشتقة من الصبوة على وزن اللبوة أو من الصابون أو من مصبنة الغـز ("*Sabiyya* is

[23] The claim that Shirbini wrote the ode is not, of course, subject to absolute proof . However, like many but not all students of the work, I believe that the odes of Abu Shaduf (in addition to the main 47-line ode, two shorter *qaSiid*s attributed to Abu Shaduf also occur in the lead-up to the main ode), and much of the rest of the colloquial verse found in the book, are the work of Yusuf Al-Shirbini himself. That this is so appears obvious in general terms from the exaggeratedly bathetic style of the ode and other verses, and from their insistence on the larcenous tendencies, cowardice, and poor table manners of the peasant (to mention only a few of the unpleasant traits attributed to him in these verses, and which a genuine peasant would be unlikely to dwell on). The debate over this issue, and the related one of the degree of Shirbini's sympathy for or hostility towards the peasant is discussed in the article by Gabriel Baer refered to above.

of the pattern of *baliyya* (“calamity”) or *raziyya* (“disaster”), and is derived from *Sabwa* (“youthful passion”)—which itself is of the measure of *labwa* (“lioness; sexually voracious woman”)—or from *Sabuun* (“soap”) or from *maSbanat al-ghuzz* (“the soap-works of the Ghuzz”)).”

Another comic technique used is the extended digression sparked by some word in the text and usually covering in great detail a topic with potential for bawdy humor. Thus, the commentary on the word بـيض (“testicles”) runs for more than 500 words and includes an extended development of the notional relationship between the penis as “father” and the testicles as his “daughters”, plus word-play on the grammatical and physical denotations of such words as نصـب (in grammar, “inflection with the vowel *a*”; in general usage “erection”) and رفْـع (in grammar “inflection with the vowel *u*”, in general usage “elevatedness”, as of the erect penis).

As a final example of Shirbini’s comedic intentions, one might cite his subtle suggestion to the effect that, rather than language reflecting some external reality, life, in fact, imitates grammar. This contention is implicit in the entire project, in as much as the latter consists of insisting that reality can be revealed by looking at the world through the lens of a spoof commentary written on a spoof poem. It also surfaces sporadically in more explicit form in assertions such as that, since the unit noun *qamla*, meaning “body louse” is grammatically feminine, all body lice are female, which in turn explains why the louse, unlike the flea, cannot jump, “for the female is weaker than the male” ( (سؤال) ما ا كمة أن اا غوث ينطّ والقملة لا تقدر على ذلك (ا واب) أن القملة...أنثى والأنثى عاجزة عن الذكر)).[24]

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[24] Bulaq p.108, lines 17 to 19.

In brief, Shirbini's explicit statements about language have to be taken with a pinch of salt since they primarily serve his purposes as a humorist.

Secondly, we have to ask what was Shirbini's attitude, as an author, towards his subject, the Egyptian peasant, and how might this influence his transmission of "rural language". A debate has long continued among scholars on this topic, some claiming that the author despised the peasant, others seeing him as his defender against Ottoman tyranny. Passages may be cited in support of both positions, and it is not the intention of this paper to rehearse the arguments on either side of this debate, which have been presented comprehensively by Baer in his 1982 article cited above. A couple of quotations may serve, however, to illustrate the issue.

On one side, it is difficult to believe that Shirbini respected or felt sympathy for a being whom he describes in an early passage (to look no further) by saying:[25]

(نذكر ما وقع لعوام بعض أهل الريف) * ووصف طبعهم الكثيف * وأخلاقهم الرذيله * وذوا م ا بيله * وأ ائهم ا قلبه * وقحوفهم ا شقلبه * وقمصـا م ا شرمطه * وأشعارهم ا خلبطه * ونسائهم ا زعجات * وما م من الدواهي و البليات ...كما قال ذلك الناظم

لا تصحب الفلاح لو أنه * نافجةٌ أرياحها صاعده

ثـ ا م قد أخـ ت عنهم * بأ م من طينةٍ واحده

"We will give an account of what befell certain common people of the countryside and a description of their coarse natures, vile

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[25] In the following passages in Arabic, the asterisks indicate the end of each segment of rhymed prose.

> morals, imbecilic persons, inside-out names, upside-down caps, raggedy shirts, messed up poems and provocative women, along with the calamities and disasters they cause…. As the poet says:
>
> *Befriend not the peasant, be he a muskpot of fragrant bouquet!*
>
> *Their oxen have let slip the secret – that they're both of one clay!"*

Equally or more vituperative passages occur throughout the book. And yet it is also true that Shirbini, on occasion, condemns the mistreatment of the peasant by the *multazims* or tax-farmers who ruled the countryside (though he devotes considerably less space to this theme than to vilification of the peasant). For example, with regard to a tax in kind called the وجبة, he says:

> وتسمى وجبة لكو ا صارت على الفلاح حكم الأمـر الواجـب علـيهم للملتزم … فهي من أنواع الظلم والأكل منها حرام ما تكن من الفلاح عن طيب نفس وانشراح صدر

> "It is called *wajba* because it has come to be like a duty (*amr waajib*) towards the *multazims* imposed on the peasants. It is a form of tyranny, and partaking of such food is forbidden by religion so long as the peasants do not give it of their own free will and cheerfully…"

These two aspects of Shirbini's stance are not incompatible, however. Shirbini does defend the peasant (though not very often) against what he perceives to be clear violations of religious law, as he was bound, as a man of religion, to do. At the same time, we have no right to doubt his word when he states unambiguously that he despises

the peasant and considers him in all ways inferior to the city-dweller. It would be naïve and historically insensitive to suppose that objecting to a sin committed against the peasants by their rulers implies sympathy for the peasants themselves. Indeed, as someone belonging to neither group, Shirbini could comfortably condemn the rulers—a long-standing tradition, after all, of the *ıulamaa'*—while despising their victims. What is critical for this discussion is that Shirbini clearly did not respect the peasant or his language, however exercised he may have been by specific injustices perpetrated against him.

What impact on the representation of "the language of the peasants" does Shirbini's basically unfavorable attitude have? Firstly, there is an obvious desire to emphasize the crudeness of the country-dweller and, consequently, the crudeness of his language. The colloquial passages, and especially the colloquial verse, are studded with references to sexual activities and bodily functions, to beasts of burden such as donkeys and oxen, and to agricultural operations, all of which serve to underline Shirbini's main contention that "the peasant and the ox are of one clay".

I believe, moreover, that Shirbini's negative attitude towards peasants is related to another, unexpected aspect of the work, namely that Shirbini's most basic claim—that the material he presents is peculiarly rural—is, in large measure, demonstrably untrue. It is noticeable, for example, that while Shirbini often identifies a particular phonetic or lexical feature as peculiar to the countryside, these characterizations are difficult to accept in the light of what we know of Egyptian Arabic in general. Thus, discussing the word *bi-tabaat* (بتبات "for sure"), he says that it is a rural expression (من ألفاظ الأرياف) and "just as for *miraath* (legacy) they say *miraat* with *taa'*, so they say *tabaat* with *taa'*" – the attribution of rural provenance being

very questionable, since the substitution of dental consonants for interdentals in the sedentary dialects took place long before Shirbini's time, as we have seen. Similarly, يـا ريـتـ ("would that I…")—as opposed to يـا ليـتـ, the literary reflex—is designated as rural, which also seems unlikely given that it is the standard urban colloquial form today; while even more strikingly, the relative article اللـي (*illi*), the only form occurring in modern Egyptian and attested long before Shirbini's time, is described as لغة ريفيـة ("a rural form"). Numerous further examples might be cited. Naturally, there is no reason to doubt Shirbini when he says that certain vocabulary items particularly associated with rural life (types of milk container, for example, or the "drovers' whips" and "cudgels" with which the text is replete) are used by country people; the point is rather that Shirbini, contrary to all objective evidence, seems to imply that colloquial *per se* is a non-urban phenomenon.

What is the explanation for this striking discrepancy between Shirbini's assertions and the nature of the language as we know it, and what lies behind such a tendentious contention? I believe the answer lies in Shirbini's attitude towards the peasant, and indeed in his world view and fundamental beliefs regarding society, human nature and aesthetics, which apear to rest to a large extent on a dichotomy between لطافة ("refinement") and كثافة ("coarseness").

Shirbini establishes this dichotomy with the book's opening words. He says:

> ﴿ا مد ﴾ الذي شرف نوع الإنسان * بنطق اللسان * وخصه بعموم الفضل والامتنان * وهيأه لإدراك حقائق ا عرفة والبيان * وتوجه بتاج الكرامة وال اعة والإتقان * وجعل الطبائع تلفة والأخلاق متباينة على ر الأزمان * وميـز صاحب الذوق السليم بلطافة الذات وحلاوة اللسان * وخص أضداده بسـوء ا ُلْق وكثافة الطبع كعوام الريف أراذل ا دران
>
> ٧٥

> "Praise be to God, Who has honored man with the gift of speech and singled him out for bounty and blessings of every kind, Who has equipped him to recognize true knowledge and eloquence, Who has crowned his brow with dignity, prowess, and virtuosity, Who has made his natures diverse and tempers disparate as long as time shall last, and Who has distinguished the man of sound taste with grace of form and sweetness of tongue, while bestowing on his opposites - such as the common people of the countryside, the base loafers by the walls - evilness of disposition and coarseness of nature!"

This opposition of لطافـة to كثافـة is invoked so consistently throughout the book that the two concepts appear the veritable poles of Shirbini's universe. And, as in the preceding quotation, these ideas explicitly or implicitly embrace appearance, manners, moral values, and language.

Complementary to the notion of a world divided between the لطيف ("refined") and the كثيـف ("coarse") is the idea that human nature is fixed according to the social origins of the individual, each category being molded by its environment. Shirbini says:

> فهم لا رجون من طور القحافه * لازمتهم ا راث وا رافه * وهز قحوفهم حول الأجران * وطردهم ا لق والغيطان * ودورا م حول الزرع * ونطهم ا صيدة والقلع * وغطوسهم ا لة و الط * وعدم اكتراثهم بالصـلاة والدين * إذ الواحد منهم لا يعرف غ ا زام والنبوت * والنقز والبنتـوت * والساقية والفَرِقلّه * وشيل الط وا له * والعياط والغاره * والطبلة والزماره * وا دوة خلف قفاه * ومزراقه وهز رداه * وحزامه الليف * والت والشنيف * وخلقته ا شرمطة وصورته ا خلبطة * وقاووقه الدنس * وگره الغلس * وطرده للغارات * والدواهي والبليات

> "Indeed, they never escape their condition of cloddishness because they are always with the plough and the drag, or shaking their caps around the threshing floors, or rushing about in the desert and the fields, or bustling around after the crops, or jumping about harvesting and reaping, or plunging into dung and mud, while they devote little time to prayer and religion. For all a peasant knows are belts and cudgels, palm switches and plough-shaft pins, waterwheels and drovers' whips, hauling mud and dung, shouting and screaming, drums and pipes, his sandals slung behind his neck, his lance and the shaking of his robes, his palm-fiber belt, his straw and his net sacks, his disheveled countenance and disfigured form, his filthy hat and grubby head cloth, rushing off on raids, disasters and calamities…"

To strengthen this assertion Shirbini early on in the book relates anecdotes, taken for the most part from the broader *adab* tradition, that illustrate the fact that a peasant can no more change his ways than a wolf can turn into a lamb, and that "like attracts like" (شـبيه الشـيء منجـذب إليـه), a phrase that, through repetition, takes on almost the quality of a slogan. In linguistic terms this means that the peasants, being coarse of nature due to their origin and environment, are also coarse of language.

In the final analysis, then, for Shirbini peasants are not so much a social group with consistent and demonstrable traits verifiable through research in the countryside, as they are symbols of the eternal order, the necessary antithesis of the refined city-dweller (and especially the Cairene, citizen of the city *par excellence*) in terms of speech, clothes, food, and moral qualities. Even further, one may speculate that in Shirbini's fast-changing world, in which many verities, not least the

supremacy of élite culture, apparently were being challenged, "the people of the countryside" for him were, ultimately, not peasants at all, but analogues for those "coarse" persons who claimed a right to participate in literate culture while lacking, from the perspective of an Azharite scholar, the qualifications to do so, and who threatened, in the process, to engulf the "refined."[26]

Do these attitudes of Shirbini's render *Hazz al-Quhuf* invalid as a source for the reconstruction of 17th-century Egyptian Arabic? Definitely not, though they must be taken into consideration. Characteristically rural vocabulary items are no doubt accurate, or the joke would lack plausibility; phonetic characteristics attributed to peasants presumably represent some contemporary speech-form, though it would be rash to assume without outside confirmation that it was specifically or exclusively rural. Overall the colloquial language remains verifiably colloquial, but, given that it is its colloquiality *per se*, rather than its specific dialectal profile that causes Shirbini to label it "rural", *Hazz al-Quhuf*, despite its claims, cannot be regarded as a reliable guide to rural-urban isoglosses. On the other hand, the insight that the book offers into the mind of an Egyptian intellectual and scholar of the mid-Ottoman period is no small compensation.

[26] On the possibility that the Ottoman period in Egypt saw a decentralization of culture and spread of literacy to classes to whom it had previously been unavailable, see HANNA, N. "*Culture in Ottoman Egypt,*" in The Cambridge History of Modern Egypt, Volume Two, edited M. W. Daly. Cambridge, 1998.

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# BACKING DISCOURSE:

# A COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH.

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## استعانات ا طاب: مدخل معر سيكولوجى

يسعى ا قال لتطوير وتوسيع حدود مفهوم "الاستعانة" ذالـك ا فهـوم البلاغـى العر القد والذى تقع إطاره دراسة سابقة للباحث، سعت إ تصنيف موعـة كبـ ة من العبارات ضعيفة الإسهام الدلا ، والـ تستخدم بتواتر واعتياد الكـلام الشفاهى، كما سعت إ فهم دلالات استخدامها. ويشـ ا قال إ أهـم ـالات البحث العلمى ا نشور الـ اسـت مع موضوعه، كدراسـة ـددات ا طـاب، Discourse Markers وأشـ ـكال التـ ـأدب Politeness، والإلبـ ـاس Equivocation، ونظرية التساوق Relevance Theory. ويرشح ا قال ـال دراسة "الأساليب ا عرفية" Cognitive Styles ليفسر –من زاوية نفسـية- ـوء ا تكلم إ الاستعانة ـذه التعبـ ات. فهى من زاوية تشـ إ حرص ا تكلم علـى قيق درجة قصوى من تطابق منطوقه مع اله ا عر "الذاتى" مواجهة كل مـن "الآخر" و"ا وضوع"، وهى من زاوية ثانية تظهر استحالة هذا التطابق حيث ا ـال ا عر الداخلى مدغم وكلى طبيعته، ا يدعم اللجوء إ التقريب والإ ام والتمييع على مستوى ا ضمون، كما يدعم اللجوء إ ا بالغة والتوكيـد والإبـداه بوصـفها استراتيجيات تواصلية تسعى لتأمـ التواصل ا قام الأساس، وهو أيضاً ما يـ ز عددا من التعقيدات ا دلية بـ (وداخل) الوظائف ا تعددة للخطاب: الإعلاميـة (زيـادة الإعلام بتخفيض اللاتأكد) وا عرفية (خلق واقع لغوى مطابق لواقع ا ـال ا عـر ) والتواصلية (خلق الصلة ا عرفية ا ؤسسة لقيام التواصل) والاجتماعية.

## *1. Introduction:*

The present article is an elaboration on some notions that have been discussed in a previous study [الرخـاوى، ١٩٩٥]. Its area of

interest is one of the least well-defined areas in the academic study of language and linguistic behavior (see, Schiffrin, 1978, Channell, 1994, for instance). Particles, parentheticals, pragmatic connectives, discourse markers, set expanders, disfluencies, discourse fillers, adverbial sentences, and many other terms and concepts intersect with what this study calls *backers*. Also relevance theory, politeness, equivocation, discourse markers are some of the approaches that deal with the area of vague and/or ambiguous communication which constitute a major concern in the present study.

The previous study was conducted without knowledge of these contributions. However, this very ignorance had its benefits in that the study was not tied within the boundaries or limits of existing approaches. With a psychological framework and background, it produced a considerably different, hopefully integrative (or integrable) approach.

## *2. A Proposed Terminology:*

The term *backing* is a translation of the ancient Arabic term "al este‘ana " [الاسـتعانة]; that was used by Al-Gahez, the ancient Arab rhetorician. Literally, "al este‘ana " [الاسـتعانة] means "seeking help". Al-Gahez applied it to indicate expressions used to fill the gaps of oral discourse which work as time gainers (الجـاحظ، ١٩٨٥ ص ١١٣). The term *alfaDH al-este‘ana* [ألفـاظ الاسـتعانة] (words of seeking help) means they work as "backers" or "supporters" in that they help the speaker to overcome some of the difficulties involved in the process of speech production. In other terms they are used to **compensate** for some deficiency in the speaker’s linguistic system (Badawy, 2000). "Backing a discourse" however, implies more than what Al-Gahez

meant by *al-este‘ana* as a compensation strategy. It also implies more than helping a discourse. Some of the meanings of the verb ‘to back’, as given in The Oxford English dictionary are: “ …**to bet on the success of** .., to put or serve as a back, **background** or support, to accompany..”. These are the relevant senses of the term to our discussion. By adopting all of them, backing a discourse implies more than the defensive function implied in the equivocation approach (that is avoidance: saying something without really saying it, or saying nothing while saying something (Bavelas et al., 1990 p.21). Also understanding it in the light of these implications will open up a horizon wider than those which have been opened by interactional sociolinguistic approaches, namely Brown and Levinson's (1987) ‘Politeness’. It opens a cognitive horizon that is no less heuristic than these approaches.

In this article, I am (still) not concerned with the whole strategy of backing a discourse, which normally includes more than using the set of expressions I call *backers*. For methodological and statistical constraints, the study of the act of backing a discourse was mainly concerned with the frequently used expressions that best perform this function and represent the phenomenon. In other words: although backing a discourse implies more than using backers, the latter seem to constitute the best entry into this very vague area. Within such a broad term, it is hoped to further understand this ambiguous phenomenon, the understanding of which is as yet not integrated.

## *3. Preliminary Examples:*

(1) In a television encounter, some Egyptian secondary school students were asked: What do you want to study at university?

(a) A male student replied:

يعـ مثلاً طبعا الطب أكيد إن شاء ا بس لو ربنـا سـهل [**I mean for example** Medicine **for sure if God wants only if God facilitates**][1]

(b) A female student said:

كلية ا ندسة وكده [Faculty of Engineering **and like that**]

(2) A university student answered the question: How do you define friendship? He said:

يعـ طبعاً هو الواحد يعـ كن يقول إن يعـ الصداقة هى أهم شئ ا ياة لأن يعـ الواحد من غـ الصديق كن أقدر أقولك ما يقدرش يعيش الدنيا دى لوحده طبعا...

[**I mean of course one, I mean, may say that**, **I mean**, friendship is the most important thing in life because, **I mean**, one without a friend, **may be I can tell you**, cannot live in this world alone, **of course**].

(3) A Cairene laborer was asked about the times he feels lonely, he said:

يعـ سيادتك وا ساعات بيبقى فيه ظروف معينة كده بتخللى الواحـد إيه ... واخد بال سيادتك معايا إزاى؟؟ موش أكثر يعـ .

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[1] The translation of the examples are literal to the maximum possible extent. More normal English expressions would lead to changes that are greater than accepted. However, example 1(b) (which is important to the discussion in section 6) is not best translated this literal way. It seems that *'and like that'* may convey more defined implications than [وكده]. The Arabic expression is so frequently and vaguely used that it does not usually connote comparability nor resemblance.

> [**I mean, your excellency, by God, sometimes** there are **certain** circumstances **like that** that makes one **what**….? **Do you pay attention your excellency to me how…? No more, I mean].**

Such utterances can be regarded as successful and socially acceptable in that normal or ordinary (Cairene) audiences, in everyday circumstances, perceive them as acceptable utterances which are merely "not very informative", That is: they do not eliminate uncertainty, nor do they reduce it to its minimum possible level (since information is what reduces uncertainty). They are full of expressions that do not add to the main content of the message, which here happens to be the information that constitutes the answer to a question (real or assumed: in the examples, they were real questions).

## *4. Preliminary Observations:*

The study was inspired by some observations on everyday conversational styles in colloquial Cairene spoken Arabic. These observations helped in the subsequent detection of *backers* by working as preliminary criteria of detection or identification. This may be summarized as follows:

(a) Speakers frequently and repetitively use a great number of expressions that some lay audiences consider to be "just habitual". The lay interpretation of the usage of them usually considered their function to be a discourse filling function. Egyptian lay audiences comment ─ sarcastically ─ on what is considered to be clichés [لوازم] of intellectual speakers, especially on the mass media. Some famous examples are:

[ قيقة ا : in fact...., الواقع in reality ]

(b) The expressions appear redundant to the lay audience — not necessary, adding nothing [ ما اش لازمة ومابتزودش حاجة الكلام, أهـى حشو وبس]. A lay audience pays more attention to the main content of the message (this being an answer to a real or an assumed question, in a strictly informative sense) than to redundant features. For example, Lindsay & O'Connell (1995) noted that transcribers working on audio taped utterances delete "discourse markers" (which are all *backers*, see below) from their written transcriptions. Also normal speakers and audiences, in normal situations, do not interrupt the flow of a speech to notice the contradiction between, for instance, starting with [قيقة ا : in fact ], and continuing with [أغلب الظـن : most probably]; or starting with [ببساطة شديدة جـدا: very simply] and continuing with [يصعب القول: it is hard to say ]; or starting with [كن القول we may say] and ending with [وهو ا لا شك فيـه ... and there is no doubt about it]. And this happens more than we usually notice (for more examples of this kind see: Bavelas et al., 1990, especially first chapter). This raises the importance of cognitive-informative factors, and not only the social or interactional factors.

(c) Being redundant discourse fillers, it follows that many backers are functionally equivalent. Their usage is thus easily interchangeable. Generally, they do not indicate a conceptual or referential structure. Although they alter the informative effectiveness of an utterance (in a strictly informative sense, redundantly, entropically or through indeterminacy), they do not change the 'main' content of a message. They are “a type of pragmatic (as opposed to content) class…” (Fraser, 1990). As Levinson puts it: “It is generally conceded that such words have at least a component of meaning that resists truth-conditional treatment” (Fraser, 1990)

(d) The co-occurrence of backers is remarkable; a discourse usually contains more than a few of them. Once they occur in an utterance they flow. Examples in the last section are illustrative.

(e) Usually utterances containing backers have some common intonational characteristics. Their common intonation is generally described as phatic. This refers to what Jakobson (1960) called "phatic intonation" (after Malinowski's (1930) "phatic communion" term).

Since it is the function of an utterance or part of an utterance which is phatic, it should be noted here that the term phatic intonation is used as an application of Bakhtin's (1985) "expressive intonation" which clearly refers to a function of the intonation of an utterance. In fact, Bakhtin used the term a long time before the modern work on intonation was begun.

The intonation referred to here may be better described as appealing for some further cooperation from the audience, which I assume is mainly an appeal for a quick, holistic and incomplete understanding of what was imprecisely expressed. In general, the intonation expresses a degree of uncertainty, which asks for acceptance, or at least for facilitating the speaker's verbalization conflicts by: "letting it go".

In addition, Schiffrin (1987) provides some useful "tentative suggestions as to what specific conditions allow an expression to be used as a [discourse] marker" (p.328). Note that all discourse markers cited by Schiffrin[2] had their equivalents detected as being *backers* by

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[2] Discourse markers that were included in Schiffrin's rigorous analysis were: the particles *'oh, well'* , the conjunctions *'and, but, or, so, because'*, the temporal adverbs *'now, then'* and the lexicalized clauses *'y'know, I mean'*.

scorers in an inter-scorer reliability measure, all of them knew nothing about Schiffrin's work at that time. Schiffrin's suggested conditions are:

"It has to be syntactically detachable from a sentence.
It has to be commonly used in initial position of an utterance.

It has to have a range of prosodic contours, e.g. tonic stress and followed by a pause, phonological reduction.

It has to be able to operate at both local and global levels of discourse, and on different planes of discourse.

This means that it either has to have no meaning, a vague meaning, or to be reflexive (of the language, of the speaker)" (ibid.: p.328).

All these suggestions apply to backers, except the necessity implied in the first condition. Most backers in Arabic are detachable but some are not, especially 'postponing specification' backers (ا اجات - البتاع –النقطـة – ا تـة). . Also languages differ in their grammatical requirements for the detachment of an expression. For example we cannot detach “never” from “by never saying enough”, but we may detach (أبداً) from (بألا نقول أبداً ما نريد).

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There are also many other devices which she mentions throughout her study as markers, these include *'say, this is the point, what I mean is..., frankly, lemme tell you, let's put it this way, like I say, what we call, so called, in other words'*).

Since an exemplified illustration of the classification system of backers and the subcategories it includes would be too long for the present context, I will rely on the examples and characteristics given above and on a brief summary of the classification system.

## *5. Detecting and Classifying Backers:*

Derived from the guiding characteristics in section 4 and some given examples of what I mean by backers, an inter-scorer reliability measure was obtained from a sample of about 10,000 words of transcribed interviews. Note that these characteristics do not represent some categorical criteria. The equivocal nature of backers is so intrinsic that it would be a matter of skewing the phenomenon to offer such criteria. However, the percentage of agreement between judges on independently detected backers was 88% between first (the researcher) and second[3] scorers, 84% between first and third[4] scorers, and 81.5% between second and third scorers. Note that the detection was not concerned with the various categories into which the backers were subsequently classified.

Standardized interviews were then performed with 96 subjects (Cairo university undergraduate students), with a mean age of 20.27 (standard deviation 1.19). The length of interviews varied between 25-60 minutes. The interviews were fully transcribed and backers were detected from both the audiotaped and the transcribed versions. This detection procedure provided a list of what was considered to be

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[3] Dr. Khaled Badr, lecturer of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University.
[4] Dr. Fekry El-Etr, lecturer of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University.

backers. Items included in the list, removed from their original context of utterance were then divided into two main categories: *Hedging* and *Reinforcing*.

*Hedging* includes 3 subcategories: Proportioning, Reservedness and Postponing Specification. *Reinforcement* includes 5 subcategories: Semi-rational cohesion, Communicative cohesion, Exaggeration, Dogmatism and Rooting (and using 'matter of fact' form of speech).

The following are some of the items from the original colloquial Cairene list, already classified. Some English equivalents are also added. This list is meant to give only a general outline of the items and their classification. Further detailed explanation or examples would be too long for the present context.

***(1) Hedging:***

To hedge is to reduce one's risk of loss (on a bet or speculation) by compensating transactions on the other side, and/or to avoid a definite decision or commitment ( Oxford Dictionary). This category includes 3 sub-categories:

(a) Proportioning: Declaring that messages are only probable, judgments are only partial. They are not definite nor final (e.g. approximately, mostly, most of the time, sometimes, I [we] may say, in my opinion, I think, as an example , it seems to me...)

تقريبا، غالباً، أغلب الأحيان، أحياناً، رأ ، نقدر نقول، أعتقد، بيتهيأ ،
على سبيل ا ثال،

(b) <u>Reservedness and restraint:</u> Declaring a reluctance to 'say', though 'saying' is actually in progress (e.g. Sorry, excuse me, I don't know what, I don't mean, I can't say), as in the example:

ماقدرش اقول ان الصداقة مابقتش موجودة خالص يع ، لكن لامؤاخذة
حضرتك احنا برضه مش كن نلاقى صديق حقيقى الوقت اللى احنا فيه
دا :

(I can't say that friendship nnow does not exist at all I mean, but also excuse me your excellency, we never find real friends these days...)

سورى، لا مؤاخذة يع ، معرفش إيه، ماقصدشي يع ، ماقدرش اقول

(c) <u>Postponing specification:</u> Referring to indefinite and unspecified terms as if they were specified (e.g. Something like that, stuff like that, a kind of, this thing [kind, matter, point, problem, story, issue,.... etc.],thingummy, whatsit given,. whatever ....)

حاجة زى كده، حاجات و تاجات، نوع من، ا تـة دى، النقطـة دى،
ا سألة النقطة، القصة ا وضوع، وكده، وبتاع

***(2) Reinforcement:*** The speaker tries to reinforce the intended communicative effects of his utterance (including informative and social effects). Reinforcement includes three main strategies: either increasing the 'apparent' cohesion of the structure of the utterance (semi-rational cohesion), introducing the message as if it were already mutually accepted ('communicative cohesion', 'rooting and using "matter-of-fact" form of speech', 'dogmatism') and/or increasing the quantitative and enthusiastic strength of the message ('dogmatism', 'exaggeration'). Five sub-categories are included:

(a) <u>Semi rational cohesion</u>: e.g. and Firstly, and so, and, so, because, then ....[وبعدين أولا، وبالتا ، بقى، فإيه بقى . .]

(b) <u>Communicative cohesion</u>: e.g. You know [see, understand....]??, O.K. ?? right?? between you and me, frankly...

زى ما انت عارف (شايف، فاهم) أو كيه؟ ماشى؟ بي وبينك، بصراحة، خدت بالك، واخد بالك معايا ازاى

(c) <u>Rooting and using "matter-of-fact" form of speech</u>: e.g. It is well known, it is obvious, naturally, normally, of course, as you know [see, realize..], in fact, actually, basically,....

زى ما هو معروف، فمفهوم طبعاً، واضح إن، طبعاً زى ما انت عارف، أساساً، أصلاً، الواقع ا قيقة

(d) <u>Exaggeration</u>: e.g. very very, extremely, absolutely, ....

جداً جداً، على الآخر مطلقاً، ائياً

(e) <u>Dogmatism</u>: e.g. sure, exactly ,with no doubt, absolutely, never, always....

أكيد، مطلقاً، أبداً ائياً بدون شك، باستمرار دائماً وأبداً

Since the aim of this classification is to conceptualize a homogenous function; there is no need to be obsessed about the obvious overlap between some of the subcategories (e.g. exaggeration and dogmatism).

The first functional impression was that both categories act as defensive tools:

*Hedging* is defensive by always indicating a way back.

*Reinforcement* is defensive by consolidating (in both senses: strengthening and combining) the communicative process. Exaggeration and dogmatism strengthen. Communicative cohesion combines by dissolving the speaker-audience polarity. Semi-rational cohesion does both (strengthening and combining) on the level of discourse: by bringing the parts of a discourse together in a rational integration and thus making it stronger. Rooting and using 'matter of fact form of speech' does both on both levels (communicative process and discourse). Origins and facts are strong because they are the end criteria, and being so, they must draw us together and consolidate our (instant communicative) relationship. (e.g. See!? You have to agree..)

However there still exists a contradiction between the two main functions of *hedging* and *reinforcing*; so much so that it is not sufficient to say that both are defensive. The first seems to decrease the informative effectiveness of the utterance. This includes generalization, exactness, certainty. The other is said to reinforce the communicative effect, including its informative intention.

To defend the seemingly odd coupling of the two functions within the frame of one concept it is necessary to articulate what should be considered the common underlying function.

First, the notion of co-occurrence of backers has been noted above. Schiffrin, for instance, reports that "Hamilton (1983) has found that y'know is likely to occur with another device ... such as and stuff like that, and whatever" (Schiffrin, 1987p.340) . In Rakhawi (1995) the correlation between the two groups was 0.39, significant at the 0.001 level.

However, despite the empirical evidence of co-occurrence, (see examples in section 3), and despite the common characteristics (usual

phatic intonation, their vagueness, the subtle nature of their referential meaning, …), this contradiction still has to be justified. Defending a position by consolidation and reinforcement is essentially different from defending it by keeping the way back safe for retreat. How come that usually the same speaker in the same discourse displays the two different strategies simultaneously? It is a "dialectical complexity" a close scrutiny of which may turn out to be heuristic.

For a long time I thought that one is just a reaction to the other, a rebound which results from the impact of the other, and that both help to achieve an equilibrium between the informative and the social requirements of a certain communicative process.

However this did not seem to resolve the problem completely. It did not explain how a 'basically intuitive' detection had gathered both into one and only one 'unnamed' frame. Scorers, including the author, did not have any internal classification basis at the time of detection. Just being redundant also does not explain the contradiction. Discourse filling as a function is just another descriptive feature which does not explain why these, and especially these two categories are used.

It may be said that this contradiction exists only because of a misplaced application of the informative standard to expressions that are highly pragmatic, and that this approach to information theory is one that few linguists would give credence to. The functions performed by backers are essentially social and interactional, thus they are pragmatic in nature. The above described defensive function is something that literature on politeness and equivocation has already tackled, both as matters of conflict avoidance, that is: defensive strategy.

Unfortunately again this does not cover the psychological interest in the issue. Psychology is concerned with language as a representational system. This justifies the major role of information theory in psycholinguistics. I do not want to drag the issue here to the dilemma of whether language is originally — and ontologically speaking — a communication tool or a cognitive representation and processing tool. To what concerns the present discussion, both functions are manifestations of the same process. This is what is relevant about the issue here.

In section 7 I will try to formulate a working hypothesis which is basically the core of an ongoing research [5].

## *6. The Dialectical Complexities of Backers: a Psychological and Information Theory Framework.*

The main criticism to the above mentioned characteristics (section 3) was that this approach to information theory (especially the notion of redundancy) is not an adequate approach for linguistics. Backers require a pragmatic approach in order to understand what they are doing to a discourse.

To defend the situation it was stressed that the information theory notions are only used as descriptive notions. There is no reliance on them to explain the function(s) that backers perform. Redundancy, for example is used in a strictly informative sense, to isolate backers.

[5] A registered Ph.D. program of research, concerned with backers, cognitive styles and cultural differences.

Isolation is a necessity for classification, and the latter is a necessity for conceptualization.

From a stylistic point of view, nothing is redundant. Whatever occurs within an utterance is stylistically significant. Style conveys information — about the communicator or about the relationship between the communicator and the audience (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p.217).

Also it has been argued that redundancy facilitates understanding, and that bald on- record assertions can be difficult to interpret if one cannot fathom the speaker's intention in making it. Why for example, would someone assert "it will rain next week" instead of "I think it will rain next week" when the problems of predicting the weather are mutually manifest?

The point that bald on-record assertions can be difficult to interpret is not against my argument. In fact it perfectly illustrates the function of redundancy in information theory. Redundancy helps to overcome the difficulties (e.g. noise, equivocation) which may face communication, thus ensuring successful communication.

It may be useful to note that many authors who are interested in the area have raised the question of redundancy (e.g. Ghobrial 1993, Schiffrin 1987 p.61,66, Brown and Levinson 1987 p.25). Schiffrin for example, asks if discourse markers do add anything if they are merely redundant features which reflect already existing discourse relationships?

Let us discuss the question of redundancy of backers technically through the last example. The question is why would one assert “It will rain next week”, instead of “I think it will rain next week”.

Informatively, one would assert in order to reduce the uncertainty of the hearer, in order to raise the degree of confidence of what is said and in who is saying it. The fact that some speakers often assert, others often hedge is the relevant fact from a psychological perspective. It is not the problem of predicting the weather.

If I utter the first utterance: “it will rain next week” , I am not promising. Normally, I perfectly know the problems related to predicting the weather, and normally I assume that the hearer knows about it just as much. It is implicitly conveyed that my utterance conveys my assumption and not an already known natural fact. It is already mutually manifest. Why then, do (some) speakers need to explicitly mention 'I think' when it is already accepted that "this is the speaker's assumption"? Informatively, it adds nothing except an emphasis on the fact that the speaker is uncertain. Why do speakers choose to make such an emphasis on mutually manifest assumptions, while it increases uncertainty, which their utterances are supposed to decrease? Isn't it entropic? That is: energy is pushing in two different directions leading to decreased informative effectiveness. This does not imply that redundancy leads to entropy, and in fact entropy (dialectical complexity in a sense) is more clearly manifest in highly backed discourses. This will be illustrated later.

If a hearer can fathom the speaker's informative intention in "it will rain next week", he is not likely to think "why did not the speaker hedge?". But if a speaker says "I think you are wrong", he/she is being polite, or may be he/she is really uncertain. In both cases he/she is being weaker by giving the listener a place at his/her expense, his/her own right to say, to make a statement and to have his/her own assumptions without necessarily and explicitly admitting and reminding the hearer that it is 'just my own assumption'. The fact that

a bald on-record assertion may seem impolite in some contexts raises the importance of politeness when analyzing such examples. However it does not mean that backers are not informatively redundant.

This puts politeness, in Brown and Levinson's (1987) sense in confrontation with informative effectiveness, and thus, creates a dialectical complexity in Spitzburg’s terms (Spitzburg, 1993). Also in this sense, politeness is not just "usually redundantly expressed" (Brown and Levinson (1987, p.25), but it is also usually entropic.

Redundancy, entropy, equivocation, uncertainty, information and many other terms of information theory basis are descriptive. Thus they do not explain why speakers choose to use (or not to use) backers. Let us consider another example that better illustrates entropy and indeterminacy, one that is not better explained in terms of politeness or face saving, nor is it explained in terms of the functional equivocation, but a description of which, in terms of information theory, is adequate and may offer a ground for further understanding.

Consider for instance the female student's answer: [كليـة هندسـة وكده] (example 1, section 3).

In this example there is no place for politeness to explain [وكـده], also it is not likely that she was equivocating in order to avoid a direct and explicit expression. She explicitly stated that she wished to study engineering. However the addition of [وكـده] has decreased the informative effectiveness of her utterance. It opens the perceptual field of the audience to many other undetermined alternatives, and by definition this is less informative. In terms of entropy, informative energy is disintegrated, it is disordered in that it is widespread and does not lead to an actual informative "work".

Let us take a step further, still in terms of the descriptive notions of information theory. From the beginning she intended to inform. If she had not intended to, she would have said something like 'I don't know' or 'whatever' or even have refused to answer. In this sense, since she intended to articulate a piece of information, her informative intention consists of [كليـة هندسـة], and [وكـده] is redundant. As mentioned before, redundancy helps to ensure communication, to realize it despite bad conditions. This means that the speaker did not feel that an utterance consisting only of [كلية هندسـة ] was sufficient. She did not verbalize "the whole" of her informative intention. But what is that whole? What is that [كـده]? What is it ensuring, communication wise, and hence backing her discourse? And what is the discourse in this utterance? The definition of redundancy may be suggestive: on one side there is nothing to be lost informatively if we remove [وكده] from her sentence. On the other side it suggests that there is a communication which is being ensured. Here is another heuristic dialectical complexity.

A strong impression that is conveyed by [وكـده] is that there is a whole which [كليـة هندسـية] did not cover, and this whole is not articulated. It is true that the question was about what she wishes to study, but it is also true that studying engineering is just a part of a big whole, a big and undifferentiated whole in the wide area of dreaming, that is the future.

Gestalt psychologists who were interested in human perception, found that:

“in many situations, parts derive their nature and functions from the wholes in which they exist and cannot be understood apart from these wholes. Nor can such dynamic wholes be understood as a summation of independent local constituents. The processes in them

are functions of interactions within the total relevant field". (Wolman, 1973).

Thus, in many situations, we may expect an urge to communicate the whole, otherwise the parts will not make sense, or at least it will not make the exact sense. In our example, [كليـة هندسـة ] was not sufficient to make her sure she communicated her whole: the Gestalt. The articulation of the whole, which is more than the sum of its parts, was not achieved, and [وكده] pointed that out.

It is mutually manifest (however not certain) that there exists no (human) utterance which is able to capture the 'whole' of the speaker 'exactly'. However, it is often needed to be declared and to be ensured. In the example it was not articulated, but it was communicated. It was communicated that: [كليـة هندسـة] is a part of her discourse, not the whole, and the speaker postponed the closure of that whole. She closed it by [وكده] which does not really close it. And here it is again: another dialectical complexity.

But how, in the presence of these dialectical complexities, does [وكده] perform a function we call backing the discourse?

Since uttering [كلية هندسة] was not enough and did not achieve the speaker's intention, and since this very intention is not easy to articulate, [كليـة هندسـة] could not have stood alone as a piece of information that does not represent what the speaker wanted her utterance to convey. The utterance was incomplete and had to be completed. It had to be completed by "a message that says something without really saying it, or says nothing while saying something" (Bavelas et al., 1990 p.21).

It is not that it is evasive or defensive. The example does not illustrate an absence of information: the information is there: [كليـة هندسة], it is even precise and differentiated, but it was not enough. In fact it was also too much (yet another dialectical complexity) It was too much because by being precise, articulated and differentiated it threatens to break the whole, to break its oneness. By informing one eliminates the other parts of a probable field. With [كلية هندسـة], the rest of the field is threatened to be eliminated from the stage of communication, hence it was represented by [وكـــده], and the informative effectiveness (the threat) was decreased.

A piece of information which really informs is always differentiated, that is: it is always threatening the integration of the phenomenological experience, that is its wholeness, its oneness. It threatens it by putting it into an exam, by putting it outside.

Let us consider another example (quoted from Channell, 1994 p.16):

“His weight was approximately three point two kilograms, un which is essentially what his birth weight was."

The weight is precise. One can hardly expect to give an assessment of the weight of a child more precise than 3.2 kg. The knowledge of the speaker is accurate and yet he/she still hedges, even though he/she is not really approximating. Politeness would hardly explain *approximately* in this context. Equivocation is not more adequate.

Is it the search for an ultimate exactness? The ultimately exact weight could have been 3247g, for example. But the weight of a child is never expected to be assessed or represented this way. So, *approximately* is better understood in terms of a psychological choice

of the speaker, a choice to be VERY exact, though neither socially nor professionally required. But how was this choice confirmed by using *approximately* ? Approximately declares two – entropic - pieces of information: first that the speaker wants to be exact beyond the normal level, and second that 3.2 kg is not a very exact piece of information. The two pieces of information are logically consistent. However the utterance as it stands is less informatively effective, it increases an unwanted uncertainty and decreases the ability of the information to 'work'. Why would a speaker give information about him/herself in such a context? The only plausible interpretation I can think of is that he/she couldn't differentiate self from nonself: as Witkin and Goodenough put it: "to characterize a system as more differentiated implies, first of all, segregation of self from nonself, or self-nonself polarity" (Witkin & Goodenough, 1981, p.19).

How is this backing the discourse? From the point of view of a speaker with such a cognitive style, it is by being extremely exact, that is by introducing the information within the whole in which it is contained, by providing its background, by displaying the self which contains it. Remember that one of the meaning of backing, as given in the OED is "to put or serve as a background".

This conclusion applies -- in the same way -- to hedging and to reinforcing. It is not (only) that speakers reinforce the informative effectiveness of their utterances, it is also that they display the urge to close a cognitive field. Psychological evidence provides consistent statistical relation between extreme responses [سويف، ١٩٦٨] and the intolerance of ambiguity [السـيد، ١٩٧١]. The latter is a manifestation of the urge to close the perceptual field.

Now, let us quote from Derrida an example that illustrates the reinforcement strategy and how it backs the discourse the same way hedging does. Derrida says:

*"Speaking frightens me because, by* ***never*** *saying enough, I also say too much." (Derrida, 1978, p.9).*

Compare Derrida's sentence with the following:

*“Speaking frightens me because* ***when I don't*** *say enough, I also say too much."*

To me, and to Derrida as it appears, when I don't say enough leaves the field open to many other cases, and thus decreases the generalization force of the information (the information being the answer to the question: why does speaking frighten me?) over the whole field. When I don't say enough may be more exact (a feature of certainty) but being more exact decreases the degree of generalization, another feature of certainty, and another dialectical complexity.

Derrida's cognitive field is concerned with the issue: "speaking does not express completely". *Always* or *sometimes* are two conditions thinking about which will destroy the unity of the field. For example, when Derrida asked his wife to bring him a glass of water speaking was enough. But it would have broken his field to express this fact within his utterance. He had to overcome, and *'never'* achieved this overcoming. It helped to overcome the possible disintegration, but, at the very same time it exposed it[6].

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[6] Is there a possible solution to this situation? This question does not belong much to our discussion that aims at concluding with a psychological hypothesis. However, to the interest of the redundancy notion, I assume that 'By not saying enough' is enough for the information there, and yet it is not

The next quote is suggestive. These are the very final lines of Garner's book "*Uncertainty and structure as psychological concepts*" (1962 p. 344):

" .... Rather, I have attempted to work at some realistic level of compromise between exactness (with its frequent lack of generality) and maximum generality (with its concomitant lack of exactness). I hope that I have hit a fruitful degree of compromise."

In the next section I will provide a very brief outline about cognitive styles as a psychological approach to understanding the backing phenomenon. I am afraid, for reasons of limited space, the reader will have to take the greater part of the responsibility to relating the above discussion with this approach.

## *7. Cognitive Styles.*

Cognitive styles are mainly concerned with the manner or the form of the cognitive behavior rather than with its content. Individuals have self-consistencies in their ways of integrating the diverse sources of information available to them. The ‘expressive movements’ that are spontaneously produced by the individual are connected to his/her self-consistent strategies of psychological and cognitive processes [فـراج، ١٩٧١]. The frequency of backers, being subject to individual differences [[الرخـــاوى، ١٩٩٥], may be seen as a feature of a communicative style. They are spontaneously produced and they hardly change the main content of the message. They rather specify a

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redundant.

psychosocial context expressed in the communicative style of the utterance.

The use of backers suggests that some speakers have a stylistic self-consistent tendency to act cognitively in a way that is more likely to arouse the need for the help of backers in order to achieve a communicative-informative intention.

Visualization, as a strategy of handling one's cognitive environment, is usually contrasted with an analytic and reasoning strategy. French (1965), for example, isolates two kinds of behavior (a) a reasoned or systematic approach, and (b) a less orderly and visualizing approach. The first relates to Witkin's 'field independent' mode, and the second to the less analytic 'field dependent' mode. (Shouksmith, 1970; p.90)

In field dependence-independence studies, analyzing a field usually involves some changing of that field, breaking up the organized pattern so as to expose the embedded figure. A visualizing tendency is, in a way, a "tendency to leave the stimulus material 'as is' " (Witkin and Goodenough 1981; p. 17). In our context, the direct stimulus material of the intended utterance is 'the mental representation, within a cognitive environment'. Piaget mentioned that the necessity to defend and articulate one's position…

" ... appears only in conversation with others. Psychological contact between partners in a conversation may establish a mutual perception leading to the understanding of abbreviated speech. In inner speech, the "mutual' perception is always there, in absolute form; therefore, a practically wordless "communication" of even the most complicated thought is the rule." (Vygotsky, 1986; p. 243)

A speaker who tends to leave such stimulus material ‘as is’ in its Gestalt nature, will speak differently from another speaker who tends to analyze the field, isolate some items, and restructure his 'direct stimulus material'. As Witkin and Goodenough (1981) put it:

"Analysis and structuring were viewed as complementary aspects of articulation. Thus, the person who experiences in articulated fashion can apprehend items as discrete from their backgrounds when the field is organized, and can impose structure on a field when the field has little inherent structure, in this way apprehending the field as organized. The enlarged dimension of individual differences was now conceived as "an articulated field approach" at one extreme and a "global field approach" at the other extreme." (p.18)

This distinction between the two styles has implications about the ways people organize their cognitive environments. These environments involve more than an instantly perceived field. According to Sperber and Wilson's definition (1995), an individual's total cognitive environment consists of not only all the facts that he is aware of, but also the facts that he is capable of becoming aware of, and of memorized information as well (p.39). To organize such a dynamically huge environment one needs to categorize and to conceptualize. The main importance of categorization and conceptualization as seen by Bruner, Goodnow and Austin (1956) is that it:

"(1) reduces the complexity of the environment (2) is a means of identification, (3) reduces the need for learning (4) is a 'means' for action; (5) permits the ordering and relating of classes of events" (Shouksmith, 1970; p.14).

On the whole, a strategy of articulation that depends upon categorization and conceptualization will provide individuals with more dominion over their mental representations, and thus over their utterance(s). According to Archard (1996), dominion is a conceptualization of an abstract element,

" ... a conceptualizer establishes dominion over a circumstance to the extent that he actively controls and manipulates it in order to assess its status with respect to some conception of elaborated reality (his own or some other conceptualizer's)." (p. 582).

Dominion, organization and articulation are features that stylistically characterize human cognitive processing. The more the individual is approaching fields globally (field dependent), the less articulated he/she is. To build on this, the more dominion and articulation the individual entertains, and the more organized the field is, the less redundant and more certain he/she will be, and thus, the less hedging and reinforcing he/she will need. He or she will also be more self assertive, suffering less from social anxiety, and thus, will not need to ask for more mutual global acceptance. It will be easier to infer and build upon relations between and within well articulated categories, and then the need for reinforcement devices in order to declare the embedded structural relations will decrease.

## *Conclusion.*

If the cognitive field is not articulate, this does not mean it cannot be communicated as such. Relevance theory provides a theoretical framework that accounts for these aspects of communication. In fact this is one of its basic foundations. However it does not show how the linguistic system provides language users with a vocabulary that is designed and/or applied to communicate undetermined Gestalts. I hope that backers will provide reasonable entries to that vocabulary, and to its underlying dialectical complexities as well.

In this paper, I did not attempt to discuss the possible relations and intersections between different existing approaches. I do not argue against any of them, I would rather choose to build upon their findings. However, it is my belief that 'backing discourse' is a broader function that underlies other strategies discussed in the literature. It is broader because by being closer to the instant cognitive field of a communicator, it is also more intrinsic in the structure of a discourse.

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# YOUNGSTERS AND NEW VOCABULARY

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## الشباب وا فردات اللغوية ا دیدة

تتناول هذه الدراسة ظاهرة ا فردات ا دیدة، وال بعض الأحيان تبدو غريبة وغ مفهومة، ولكنها منتشرة بسبب استخدام الشباب ا حيا م اليومية. بعـض هذه ا فردات ا أصل لغوي ولكنها تستخدم لتعطي مع جديداً مثل كلمة "بيئة" ال يستخدمها الشباب ع "شيء هابط ا ستوى"، وبعض هذه ا فردات ليس ا أصـل لغوي ولكنها دخلت اللغة العامية مثل كلمة "أنتخ" ال تسـتخدم عـ الراحـة والاسترخاء دون عمل أي شيء. هذه الظاهرة سببها أن الشباب دائمـا ـاولون إثبات الذات والتحرر من جيل الآباء ثا عن هوية خاصة م. ولذلك فهم يتـأثرون بالتقاليد الغربية ال تدخل تمعنا ويتأثرون بالأغنية الشبابية والأفـلام وا سلسـلات التليفزيونية ال بعض الأحيان تستخدم كلمات جديدة أو غريبة عن اللغة اليومية.

قامت الدراسة على عشرين كلمة من الكلمات الشبابية ا نتشرة اليوم ب الشباب ووضعت استبيان قام لمئه موعتان؛ الأو ثل الشباب من سن١٥ إ ٢٠ عاما، والثانية ثل ا يل الأك منذ سن ٤٥ إ ٦٠ عاما وقارنت بينهما. وأظهرت النتائج عدم فهم معظم هذه الكلمات من ا موعة الثانية ح أن ا موعة الأو فهمـت كل الكلمات ح لو يستخدمو ا كلها حيا م اليومية لأ ـم يسـمعو ا مـن أقرا م.

The role of the young generation in introducing new meanings to existing words and how these meanings are perceived by society especially the elder generation is being studied in this paper. It focuses on the study of language of adolescents and their use of either existing words in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic to give new meanings, or introducing new words to express themselves, searching for their identity. For example, the word /bii?ah/ (environment) is used to express that someone or something is not prestigious or up to standard. Similarly, /TaHn/ (grinding) is used to mean extremely (in a positive context) by adolescents. Such meanings are not understood or accepted by the elder generation. Adolescents use special vocabulary among themselves and not with their parents or members of another generation. If used, misunderstanding or no communication occurs.

Language differences reflect basic behavior differences between groups of people. Many social factors are responsible for much of the diversity in ways of speaking. Class, status, age, sex and ethnic distinctions are often reflected in language differences. The value placed on a certain way of saying something is closely associated with the social status of the people who say it that way. The aim of this study is to explore the language of adolescents: their use of new words, its origin and how new meanings emerge. It also investigates misunderstanding that occurs between different age groups, for example the elder generation uses /TaHan/ (grind) to mean to exhaust

oneself in work. Today a new meaning emerged which is “extremely” (good, wonderful, pretty..).

The study is based on interviews with two groups: adolescents (age 15-20) and an elder group (age 45-60). The results reveal misunderstanding of some words as well as correct or incorrect guesses of meanings of other words. The elder group expressed confusion and discomfort with these words. Adolescents stated that these words are used among their peers because the elder generation does not understand them.

Many studies have dealt with the role of gender, ethnic groups, social status, geographical differences and age. Yet few studies dealt with language of adolescents in particular. Their role in innovation of words and coining new meanings is worth investigating. The focus of this study is to crystallize the crucial role the younger generation plays in the evolution of language.

Standardization of a spoken language can never be achieved except in theory. There are certain standards and norms that are agreed upon by a community to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser degree - in order to maintain communication with a minimum of misunderstanding. Linguistic change is not unconstrained. Adequate accounts of change must consider the social factors that resist change and maintain norms. It is not possible to account for linguistic change without inquiring into the social origins and social mechanisms of change. There are social mechanisms that encourage change (such as: the prestige attached to certain pronunciations, or use

of certain words), and other social mechanisms that seek to stabilize a language or dialect; and in so doing prevent linguistic change (Milroy, 1987).

There are two kinds of mechanisms that tend to encourage stability in the use of language or dialect. Both may apply at any level of society, but one or the other may be dominant at some level. The first is covert and informal pressure for language maintenance exerted by members of one's peer or social group. The second is overt and institutional enforcement of norms through public channels such as the educational and broadcasting systems. Covert maintenance attempts to answer the question why people continue to use low status varieties when they know that it may well be in their economic and social interests to acquire a variety of high prestige. It seems to be true that low prestige varieties (although changing in the course of time) can persist as distinct from the standard over long periods of time. Social network theory proposes that varieties of language are subject to maintenance through pressure exerted by informal ties of kin and friendship. A network can be described as dense when, in a given group of persons, everybody knows everybody else. Ties of this kind typically exist in small traditional communities and well-defined urban societies. But they may also exist at higher levels of society e.g. in professional sub-groups and in upper-class society where contacts may be maintained over long distances owing to important common interests. If a member of a close-knit group begins to adopt speech that is not exactly the common speech of the network, he will face rejection. To maintain the moral, emotional and practical support of his network peers, he will have to use their familiar speech patterns.

Languages however do not exist independently of speakers, and if changes take place they must be reflexes of speaker innovations, established as new norms by speaker acceptance (Milroy, 1987).

The Arabic language, like other languages is dynamic and is always accommodating new vocabulary. According to McLoughlin (1972), there are three reasons for that:

1) to meet the pressing demands of modern scientific technology e.g. /al-،aql al-‘iliktruniyy/ (lit.) electronic brain;

2) the constant contact with European languages does influence vocabulary e.g. /’istratiijiyy/ <strategic> is used in both Modern Standard Arabic as well as Spoken Arabic;

3) the use of emotionally loaded words “where the speakers are making deliberate effort to raise the tone of the proceedings by the use of such expressions e.g. /mukhaDrim/ a word used to describe a person born before the time of Prophet Muhammed and still alive during his mission” (McLoughlin, 1972); now in Egyptian spoken Arabic it means “a spanning more than one generation, experienced in the old ways and the new” (Badawi, 1986).

Young people, too, have their influence on language. In modern society where change takes place rapidly, the gulf between the young people and their parents becomes wider and deeper than in previous generations. In the new permissive society, young people believe that nobody has any right to tell them what to do. This produced its own

language made up of new expressions as well as old words used in a different way which is not considered “taboo” or “obscene”. Young people have their own culture by which they try to rebel against traditional society in order to achieve their own identity. They live by “instinct rather than by theory, they are more interested in present satisfactions than the future security” (Hudson, 1983). They are interested a style of dress, hairstyle, attitudes and behaviour as well as speech that would distinguish them from other members of their group. Youth culture is a culture largely created by pop music. It has been the major carrier of social change during the past 40 years (Hudson, 1983). This also applies to the Egyptian society, recently young Egyptians have been affected by Western society as well as by Egyptian “modern” music, songs and films.

Young people develop their own *slang* or *code* where they use a certain word or phrase with a strong connotation of informality as compared with the words they replace. Much of this usage has a short life span, arising quickly and falling just as quickly into disuse. Most typically it is associated with a person’s teenage and early adult years. Other slang items actually last fairly long and become stabilized as a kind of national slang (Wolfram, 1989). When young people become involved in a formal style of life, i.e. start their professional careers, this slang starts fading away and they become more conscious of what they say. They are then interested in impressing and finding a more formal identity.

This study explores 20 of the new vocabulary items introduced and used by young people in Cairo and its effect on the older generation.

It also tries to find the origin of these words and its relation to its original meaning. Twenty words were chosen from natural speech that took place among the young either in their telephone conversations or in their gatherings. A questionnaire was then designed presenting these words in sentences, asking for their meaning, and whether these words are among the active vocabulary of the young people. The questionnaire (Appendix I) was answered by two groups each composed of 25 individuals. The first group (Group A) represents the young generation aged 18-25 who are mostly university students or graduates. The second group (Group B) represents an older group aged 35-65, educated and working in different occupations.

The 20 words were looked up in the "Dictionary of Egyptian Spoken Arabic" (Badawi and Hinds, 1986), to compare the meanings given by the younger group (in their answers of the questionnaire) to the standard meaning if the word existed in the dictionary.

### *LIST OF THE 20 SELECTED WORDS.*

1) /haTal/[هطــل]: "to be slow and weak, be slack and undisciplined, /bi-yhaTTal/ he ambles awkwardly along, he rambles on when he talks, /mihaTTal fi-libsu/ sloppy in his dress".

- Young people's usage (hereafter YPU): silly, crazy or stupid.

2) /khayyish/ [خـيش]: “to cover or wrap with sacking or burlap”

- YPU: failed, did poorly in something, or bumped into something.

3) /bii’ah/ [بيئة] “physical environment, social environment” /min bii’ah waTya/ from a low class.

- YPU: (without an adjective) low class, low standard.

4) /lasa؛/ [لسـع] “to scorch, to sting, (slang) to steal, to become stinging or acrid (of taste)”

- YPU: became crazy, his mind flipped.

5) /hartil/ [هرتل] NOT FOUND IN THE DICTIONARY

- YPU: became crazy or saying nonsense.

6) /rewesh/ [روش] “rawash, to distract, disturb, unnerving”

- YPU: cute, cool, beautiful and stylish.

7) /kabbar/ [كبر] “to enlarge, expand, enhance, to cause to grow or increase in size, to cause to mature, bring up, to give the appearance of age, to seek a large size of, to utter the formula ‘allaahu ‘akbar.”

- YPU: don’t pay attention, ignore, don’t care, forget, let it go.

8) /mifayyaS/ [مفيص] NOT FOUND IN THE DICTIONARY

- YPU: became exhausted, unable to perform

9) /’afash/ [قفـــش] “to grip, seize, to catch out, catch in the act, to jam, to wisecrack”

- YPU: to be angry at someone, to have negative feelings towards someone as a result of his doing”

10) /TaHn/ [طحن] NOT FOUND IN THE DICTIONARY

- YPU: as an adjective for extremely good, very positive.

11) /’iTTaHan/ [اطحن]“/TaHan/ to grind, mill. /’iTTaHan/ to be ground”

The verb is used to mean exhausted or overworked.

- YPU: *same meaning is maintained.*

12) /’ishTah/ [قشطة] “cream, sour cream, /SabaaH-il-‘ishTah/ a very good morning.”

- YPU: O.K, good, alright.

13) /’antakh/ [أنتخ] NOT IN THE DICTIONARY

- YPU: to relax or sit doing nothing.

14) /falsa،/ [فلسع] “to skedaddle, hop it”

- YPU: *same meaning is maintained.*

15) /’inshakaH/ [انشـــكح] “to be filled with pleasure, be enraptured”.

- YPU: *same meaning is maintained.*

16) /sabbit/ [ثبت] “to fix, fasten, to stabilize, make firm, to hire on a permanent basis after a probationary period, to provide evidence, establish validity”.

- YPU: to cause embarrassment, unable to respond due to embarrassment, to put someone in place by convincing argument.

17) /’itba،at/ [اتبعت] “to be sent”

- YPU: has been fooled, tricked, and deceived.

18) /kharyaT/ [خـــريط] “to exhaust, drain of strength, to become exhausted, to do badly, fail”

- YPU: /mikharyaT/ [ـــريط] to mean exhausted (the passive participle of the verb).

(Although the word exists in the dictionary, only 3 in group A understood it but do not use it, and none in Group B understand or use it.)

19) /sayyaH/ [سـيح] “to spill out (over a large area), to fill to overflowing, to melt (down), to defrost, to heat in order to soften, to liquefy”. Metaphorically used to mean melt with desire or to turn on desire.

- YPU: spread out information pertaining to a secret or words said in confidence.

20) /’ustaaz/ [أسـتاذ] “title of, and polite form of address or reference to a teacher or to a man not otherwise qualified for a title (e.g. by profession or status); professor (acad.); teacher (school); man wearing the traditional dress of a /sheekh/.

- YPU: when used as an adjective, means excellent, great, and wonderful, of high quality.

* * *

Out of these 20 words:

a) three words do not exist in the dictionary: /hartil/ <to say nonsense>; /fayyaS/<to become exhausted> and /’antakh/ <to relax doing nothing>.

b) seventeen words have entries in the dictionary; twelve words of the young people’s vocabulary display different meanings than the original meaning found in the dictionary.

c) four words have similar meanings in the dictionary and the young people’s vocabulary: /’ishTah/ <great>: /SabaaH-il-‘ishTa/ <a very good morning>, /falsa،/ <got away>: /’istalaf-il-fuluus wi-falsa،/ <he borrowed the money and was never seen again (to skedaddle), /’inshakaH/ <to be filled with pleasure>, /mikharyaT/ <to become exhausted>

## *THE QUESTIONNAIRE*

The questionnaire (cf, Appendix I) filled out by the young group showed the following characteristics summarized in the two tables below: In Table 1 dealing with the comprehension of the 20 vocabulary items we notice that:

***TABLE 1:* Comparison of the Comprehension of the Two Study Groups with Respect to the 20 Vocabulary Items**

| **VOCAB. ITEM** | **GROUP A (25)** | | **GROUP B (25)** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **(20 words)** | **No.** | **%** | **No.** | **%** |
| haTal | 25 | 100 | 16 | 64 |
| khayyish | 24 | 96 | 6 | 24 |
| bii’ah | 25 | 100 | 13 | 52 |
| lasa، | 25 | 100 | 13 | 52 |
| hartil | 25 | 100 | 4 | 16 |
| riwish | 25 | 100 | 11 | 44 |
| kabbar | 25 | 100 | 15 | 60 |
| mifayyaS | 25 | 100 | 18 | 72 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ‘afash | 25 | 100 | 5 | 20 |
| TaHn | 25 | 100 | 12 | 48 |
| ‘iTTaHan | 25 | 100 | 8 | 32 |
| ‘ishTah | 25 | 100 | 11 | 44 |
| ‘antakh | 23 | 92 | 5 | 20 |
| falsa، | 25 | 100 | 19 | 76 |
| ‘inshakaH | 24 | 96 | 23 | 92 |
| sabbit | 25 | 100 | 2 | 8 |
| ‘itba،at | 25 | 100 | 4 | 16 |
| mikharyaT | 10 | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| SayyaH | 25 | 100 | 1 | 4 |
| ‘ustaaz | 25 | 100 | 12 | 48 |

a) The 20 words were understood by almost all members of group (A). One word, /mikharyaT/ <exhausted> was understood by 40% of the younger generation.

In group (B) – the older generation – there was no unanimous understanding for any of the words. One word /mikharyaT/ <to be exhausted> was not understood by any member of group B, while another /sayyaH/ <to spread out a secret> was understood by one member (4%).

In group (B), the word /bii’ah/ was explained by 92%, /falsa،/ by 76%, and /mifayyaS/ by 72% of the group - followed by a steep decline in the understanding of the remaining words.

b) The words /khayyish/ <to fail, or mess up> and /’inshakaH/ <to be happy> were not known by 4% of group A. The word /’antakh/ <to relax> was not known to 8%.

In group (B), the word /mikharyaT/ <to be exhausted> was not known by 100%, while /khayyish/ <to fail or mess up> was not known by 76%.

c) All the other words were well explained by the subjects of group (A) even if they did not use them as part of their active vocabulary.

Table 2 shows that 6 words out of twenty were used by all members of group (A); while one word of the 20 was used by one member only (4%). In group (B), 12 words of the 20 (60%) were not used by any subject, whereas one word (/kabbar/) of the 20 was used by 10 members (40%).

**Table 2:** ***Comparison of the Usage of the Two Study Groups with Respect to the 20 Vocabulary Items***

| **VOCAB. ITEM (20 words)** | **GROUP A (25) No.** | **%** | **GROUP B (25) No.** | **%** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HaTal | 20 | 80 | 0 | 0 |
| Khayyish | 19 | 76 | 0 | 0 |
| Bii’ah | 23 | 92 | 3 | 12 |
| Lasa، | 19 | 76 | 3 | 12 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hartil | 21 | 84 | 0 | 0 |
| Riwish | 21 | 84 | 3 | 12 |
| Kabbar | 25 | 100 | 10 | 40 |
| MifayyaS | 18 | 72 | 4 | 16 |
| ‘afash | 25 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| TaHn | 25 | 100 | 2 | 8 |
| ‘iTTaHan | 22 | 88 | 0 | 0 |
| ‘ishTah | 20 | 80 | 0 | 0 |
| ‘antakh | 17 | 68 | 0 | 0 |
| Falsa، | 17 | 68 | 6 | 24 |
| ‘inshakaH | 15 | 60 | 9 | 36 |
| Sabbit | 25 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| ‘itba،at | 25 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| MikharyaT | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| SayyaH | 18 | 72 | 0 | 0 |
| ‘ustaaz | 25 | 100 | 0 | 0 |

The second section of the questionnaire addressed the usage of these words by direct questioning:

In group (A), 21 subjects (84%) had heard all the words; 4 (16%) heard some. 25 subjects (100%) of the younger generation use some of these words. All heard the words from friends.

In group (B), 20 (80%) heard some of these words from their children or friends, one subject (4%) never heard any of these words

before. 13 (52%) of the subjects use some of these words, 12 (48%) never used them.

In the younger generation, 2 (8%) use all the 20 words, 5 (20%) use these words with parents, 20 (80%) use them with friends, 8 (32%) use them with sisters and brothers. 3 (12%) said that their parents understood the words they use. 22 (88%) said friends, sisters and brothers understood these words.

In the older generation, the 25 subjects (100%) agreed that these words represented the language of the young generation. 5 (20%) mentioned that it was the language of the uneducated. One (4%) mentioned that some of the words were used in a T.V program addressing the same issue.

The younger generation (Group A) on the other hand, agreed that young people used these words. 6 (24%) said these words were used among the educated; 8 (32%) said among the uneducated.

The results of the present study show that there are new words introduced into the daily language. The difference between the results of the two groups is distinct: One group shows good understanding for these words and uses them, whereas in the second group, although some admit the exposure to these words, they do not understand most of them and do not use them in their daily life. They all labeled these words as young generation’s words. The reactions of the young generation while filling out the questionnaire were positive; they expressed delight to see these words written down. Some added to the list a total of another 20 words of their own vocabulary (Appendix II).

The second group on the other hand, expressed astonishment and sometimes negative feelings towards the questionnaire. One lady refused to fill out the questionnaire and said that these were obscene words that she could not respond to.

Our results show three words (15%) of the studied vocabulary items not existing in the dictionary. This shows the need for regular and constant evaluation of existing material in order to include the dynamics of the constantly changing language. Of interest is the fact that four words (20%) had similar meanings both in the dictionary and in the young people's vocabulary showing the development of language to be gradual, ongoing and linked to the original roots.

When comparing both study groups, namely the younger generation (Group A) and the older generation (Group B) we note that the vocabulary studied was understood by almost all members of the former group, while no unanimous understanding of any of the words existed in the latter group, showing the generation gap in the understanding of vocabulary items. Our results show 96% of the younger generation to utilize more than one vocabulary item – in sharp contradistinction to 60% of the older generation utilizing more than one item.

Possible explanations include the fact that the vocabulary items belong to the younger generation who are more comfortable with their use. One item was utilized by only 40% of the younger group. The possible cause may be due to its novelty making it not common or totally accepted by the younger generation. Of particular interest is

the fact that this word /mikharyaT/ exists in the dictionary with the same meaning <exhausted> yet even the older group failed to identify it (4%).

Group (A) subjects were comfortable explaining almost all vocabulary items whereas in group (B), single items were explained by 92%, (‘inshakaH), 76% (falsa، ), and 72% ( miffayyaS ) followed by a steep decline in the understanding of the meaning of the remaining items. This shows the presence of a wide difference between both groups in the understanding and perception of these vocabulary items that normally reflects itself on the usage of these items. Upon comparing the source of the vocabulary items studied we note that group A members unanimously heard them from friends whereas group B members heard some of these words from their children or their own friends. Among the older group, those who used some of the words had teenage children or were in contact with the young generation through occupation (e.g. a hairdresser) which explains their understanding and use of some of the words. The younger generation unanimously used the items whereas 48% of the older generation indicated to have never used them.

This finding again reflects that newly introduced terms will take time before filtering through generation gaps. Of particular interest is the fact that the younger generation do not believe their parents to understand the words that they use (only 12% stated parents understood) in sharp contrast to 88% of friends, sisters and brothers noted to understand the vocabulary items under investigation. One of the subjects mentioned that there was a T.V. program that discussed

some of these words in interviews with young people. Another mentioned reading an article in a magazine where some of these words were mentioned.

The fact that the media deals with this issue shows the significant spread of new vocabulary of "the young" and that it is not obscene or vulgar but it represents a special language of a group seeking identity, and that it is infiltrating the spoken language. When a mother used this kind of language her teenage daughter commented "watch out you are using our vocabulary" which proves that the young recognize and admit having their own vocabulary which is special and criticize its use by an "outsider" from their group.

This study shows the growing of the gap between the generations, it is not only affecting the relationship between them but also now affecting the understanding of the language used. The young people are constantly searching for an identity that would distinguish them from the rest of society and in doing so they are affected by the Western society and globalization which is obvious in today's society. Also, the songs and music have changed and a new wave has grown called "the youngsters songs" where the rhythm is fast and the words address the young. In some cases the words do not exist in the Arabic language and are words newly introduced, accepted and spread because of their attraction for the young people. Movies also have an effect on the change of language; for the young people tend to be impressed and imitate the movie stars and it is noticed that some movies include new vocabulary.

# APPENDIX I

## استبيان

السن: ☐ ا هنة: ☐

ا الة الإجتماعية: أعزب ☐ متزوج: ☐

هل عندك أولاد؟ نعم ☐ لا ☐

سن الأولاد ☐ ☐ ☐

**أكتب مع الكلمات ال تها خط وأذكر هل تستخدمها أم لا؟**

| | أستخدمها | لا أستخدمها |
|---|---|---|
| ١) إيه **ا طل** ده ________ | ☐ | ☐ |
| ٢) أنا **خيشت** الامتحان ________ | ☐ | ☐ |
| ٣) ا امعة بقت **بيئة**. ________ | ☐ | ☐ |
| ٤) الراجل **لسع** ________ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **٥)** الراجل ده **هرتل** ________ | ☐ | ☐ |
| ٦) البنت دي **روشة** ________ | ☐ | ☐ |

| | أستخدمها | لا أستخدمها |
|---|---|---|
| ٧)يا عم **كبر** ________ | ☐ | ☐ |
| ٨) أنا **مفيصة** النهاردة ________ | ☐ | ☐ |

٩) انت **أفشت** عليه ليه؟ ________ ☐ ☐

١٠) الفيلم ده حلو **طحن** ________ ☐ ☐

١١) **اطحنا** النهارده ________ ☐ ☐

١٢) **فشطة** ياللا نروح ________ ☐ ☐

١٣) **هأنتخ** البيت النهاردة ________ ☐ ☐

١٤) **فلسعت** منه امبارح ________ ☐ ☐

١٥) **انشكحت** أوي النهاردة ________ ☐ ☐

١٦) **ثبتة** بكلامك ده ________ ☐ ☐

١٧) أنا **اتبعت** ________ ☐ ☐

١٨) أنا **ربطة** النهاردة ________ ☐ ☐

١٩) هأقولك بس **ماتسيحيش** ________ ☐ ☐

٢٠ ) الرحلة دي كانت **أستاذة.** ________ ☐ ☐

---

هل عت هذه الكلمات من قبل؟ نعم ☐ لا ☐ بعضها ☐

إن كانت الإجابة بنعم من مَن؟ الأبناء ☐ الأصدقاء ☐ الأهل ☐

هل تستخدم هذه الكلمات ؟ بعضها ☐ كلها ☐ لا ☐

هل تستخدمها مع: الأهل ☐ الأصدقاء ☐ الأخوات ☐ الشارع ☐

هل يفهمها: الأهل ☐ الأصدقاء ☐ الأخوات ☐

رأيك، من يستخدمها؟ ا ثقف ☐ غ مثقف ☐

الكبار ☐ الشباب ☐ لأطفال ☐

هل تستخدمها حواراتك : ا ل ☐ ا درسة /ا امعة ☐

العمل ☐ الشارع ☐

هل د رد الفعل عند استخدام هذه الكلمات:

قبول ☐ سلـ ☐ عدم الفهم ☐

هل هناك كلمات مستحدثة نذكرها؟ نعم ☐ لا ☐

ما هي وما معناها؟ ______________________________

# Appendix II:

## A List of Vocabulary Items Added by the Young Group

| | |
|---|---|
| /'aSSar/ [قصر] | : quickly |
| /'it،aamil/[إتعامل] | : to handle matters, do O.K |
| /'itkharta'na/ [ا رتأنا] | : we were given a hard time |
| /banaat stiil/ [بنات ستيل] | : pretty girls |
| /daayyis/ [دايس] | : putting all his effort into s.t. |
| /dimagh/ [دماغ] | : cool |
| /dimaghak/ [دماغك] | : don't pay attention, not important |
| /kabbar/ [كبر] | : as above |
| /dimaghuh ،aalia/ [دماغه عالية] | : cool |
| /faHt/ [فحت] = /TaHn/[طحن] | : extremely |
| /farfuur/ [فرفور] | : coward |
| /hayyis/ [هيس] | : crazy, drunk, extremely happy |
| /katt/ [كت] | : ran away |
| /kattit/ [كتيت] | : ran away |
| /minazzamiin/ [ منظّم] | : said about two showing interest in each other |
| /muuz/ [موز] | : very pretty |
| /muzza/ [مزة ] | : a pretty girl |
| /sa'aT/ [سقط] | : tired |
| /khallaS/ [خلّص] | : quickly |
| /yiHaflaT/ [فلط ] | : saying nonsense |
| /yishrid/ [يشرد] | : to spread news or secrets, untrustworthy |
| /zaghlil/ [زغلل] | : to give s.o. a good time |
| /zanbouu'/ [زنبوء] | : a prank |

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## APPENDIX

LIST OF RECENT THESES IN ARABIC LINGUISTICS.
More information and abstracts are available on the internet website: www.linguistlist.org

ADRA, Mohamed . 1999. *Identity Effects and Opacity in Syrian Arabic: An Optimality Theory Analysis*

AL-SEGHAYAR, Mohamed S.1997. *The Syntax of Exclamatives: A Study of Arabic*

AL-WATBAN, Abdullah M .1998. *Psychoacoustic analysis of intonation as a carrier of emotion in Arabic and English*

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TESTEN, David D. 1995. *Asseverative la- in Arabic and Related Semitic Particles*